THE BIBLE OF BOXING

The RING

MUHAMMAD ALI
POSTER INSIDE

100 BEST FIGHTERS IN THE WORLD

ROMAN GONZALEZ

GENNADY GOLOVKIN

ANDRE WARD

SERGEY KOVALEV

OUR EXCLUSIVE RANKINGS P.34

MIKEY GARCIA
HE'S BACK AND THINKING BIG P. 60

BOBBY CHACON
SO LONG TO A GREAT WARRIOR P. 66

TYSON FURY
WHAT THE HELL HAPPENED? P. 80

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Mikey Garcia's return to boxing was a success, a fifth-round knockout of Elio Rojas (right).

GARCIA COURTESY OF ANDY SAMUELSON_PBC

FEATURES

34 RING 100
OUR ANNUAL LIST OF THE WORLD'S BEST FIGHTERS
By David Greisman

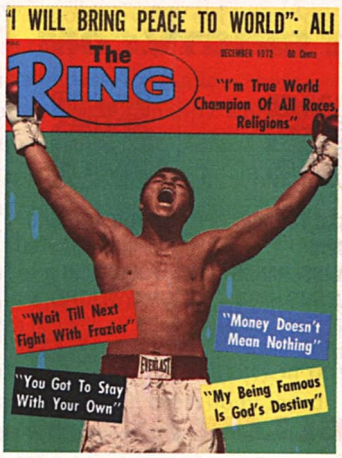
60 MIKEY'S BACK
GARCIA DOESN'T REGRET THE STAND HE TOOK
By Norm Frauenheim

66 BOBBY CHACON: 1951-2016
JOVIAL WARRIOR WAS A FAN FAVORITE
By Don Stradley

72 KOVALEV VS. WARD
FIVE KEY QUESTIONS ABOUT EACH FIGHTER
By Michael Rosenthal

76 AARON PRYOR: 1955-2016
JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHT WAS AN ALL-TIME GREAT
By Ryan Songalia

INSIDE: SPECIAL MUHAMMAD ALI POSTER



DEPARTMENTS

5 RINGSIDE

6 OPENING SHOT

8 COME OUT WRITING

11 ROLL WITH THE PUNCHES

14 BEST I'VE TRAINED: NACHO BERISTAIN

16 READY TO GRUMBLE By David Greisman

18 JABS AND STRAIGHT WRITES By Thomas Hauser

20 RING IQ By Bernard Hopkins

22 FIGHTS OF FANTASY: GUILLERMO RIGONDEAUX VS. VASYL LOMACHENKO By Tom Gray

24 OUTSIDE THE ROPES By Mitch Abramson

26 RING RATINGS PACKAGE

78 BOOK REVIEWS By Thomas Hauser

80 ACROSS THE POND By Gareth A Davies

84 DOUGIE'S MAILBAG By Doug Fischer

86 NEW FACES: DANIEL GONZALEZ By Mitch Abramson

88 WOMEN'S BOXING By Thomas Gerbasi

90 RINGSIDE REPORTS By Norm Frauenheim

94 COMING UP

96 FROM THE ARCHIVE

98 AT THE FIGHTS

AT RINGTV.COM

NYSAC TURMOIL GROWS
NEW INSURANCE RULE HITS HARD
GO TO: http://bit.do/nysac-turmoil

GOOD AND BAD OPINION: CANELO FOLLOWING MAYWEATHER
GO TO: http://bit.do/canelo-good-bad

78

The photos of Peter Angelo Simon capture a moment of Muhammad Ali's time.

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The RING

VOLUME 96, NO. 1 / JANUARY 2017

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comeoutwriting@sepublications.com
or P.O. Box 251753,
Los Angeles CA, 90025

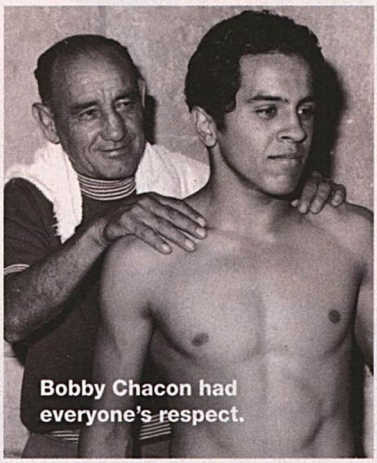
THE RING (ISSN: 0035-5410), Vol. 96, NO. 1 (January 2017), is published nine times per year (no issues in June, October and February) by Sports and Entertainment Publications, LLC, P.O. Box 90254 Brooklyn, NY 11209. Periodicals postage paid at Brooklyn, NY 11209 and additional post offices. Postmasters: Send change of address notices to: THE RING, P.O. Box 433122, Palm Coast, FL 32164-3122. Single copy price $8.95 in U.S.A. and Canada (£4.95 in the U.K.). Subscription price U.S. And possession $49.00 for nine issues; Canada and Mexico add $7 for nine issues per year and all remaining countries add $15.00 for nine issues per year. Not responsible for the loss or non-return of unsolicited articles or photographs, which will not be returned unless accompanied by a self-addressed envelope bearing the proper amount of postage. The entire contents of this magazine are copyright ©2017 Sports and Entertainment Publications, LLC. No part of this magazine may be reproduced without the written permission of the publisher. All rights reserved. Publisher is not responsible for the accuracy of the content of advertisements appearing in this magazine, nor the delivery or quality of merchandise or services offered. No endorsement of any such advertisement is intended or implied. Advertisers and agencies assume liability for claims arising from the content of their advertisements. FOR ADVERTISING INQUIRES AND RATES: (213) 233-2952. U.S. / Canadian and International distribution by Comag Marketing Group LLC, 155 Village Blvd #200, Princeton, NJ 08540 UK distribution by Comag Tavistock Rd., West Drayton, Middlesex UB77QE, England. Printed in U.S.A

A SPECIAL MAN

I was walking with a friend in downtown Los Angeles about 15 years ago when I saw a shirtless, apparently impaired man in the distance bounding wildly our way. My heart sank as he got closer: I realized it was Bobby Chacon.

I became a boxing writer a few years after Chacon retired but I saw his fights, some of which were classic wars that dazzled fans of that period. And I had run into him a number of times in the subsequent years; he often popped up as a special guest at boxing functions in the L.A. area.

Chacon had a difficult life, including the suicide of his wife, early dementia and occasional homelessness after his boxing career. The list is long. One wouldn't know it by interacting with him, though; he was unfailingly cheerful. And he spread the cheer, perpetually smiling and hugging warmly anyone who recognized him.



Bobby Chacon had everyone's respect.

Perhaps he was at his most gleeful when he was introduced at big fights, pumping his fists as if he were shadowboxing and soaking in the genuine adulation from the fans on hand. Those moments must've brought him back to the days when he was the darling of the local boxing scene.

I was fortunate to spend some time with him over several days while working on a story for the Los Angeles Daily News. Things were relatively good at that time. He had been taken in by an amateur boxer-turned-minister whom a young Chacon had encouraged when the preacher was a teenager.

Those interviews confirmed everything I had believed about him. He was warm, even sweet, and happy in spite of his circumstances. And he was more lucid than I expected at times.

I got to know him well enough that I was comfortable asking him, "Bobby, do you know that you slur your words when you talk?" He understood exactly what I meant but seemed surprised. He smiled shyly and shrugged. "Really?" he asked in a matter-of-fact manner. "I don't hear it. I sound normal to me."

Normal for Chacon wasn't normal for the rest of us in many more ways.

"Schoolboy" was bright and engaging as an active fighter in his prime, when he took the punches that would eventually steal his intellect and leave him in a permanently impaired state.

He did his best to fight through it, much as he dealt with challenges he faced against Ruben Olivares, Alexis Arguello and the rest. I'm sure there were dark moments – moments when he was bewildered, even frightened – but somehow he remained positive.

We should've felt only pity for him the past few decades but that cheerfulness, the smile – those hugs – made us happy when we were around him. He was a gift as a warrior in the ring and as a damaged person outside it.

That's why it was heartbreaking to see him on the downtown street that day. All of those he touched wanted the best for him. As Don Stradley writes in Chacon's obituary in this issue (Page 66), everybody loved Bobby Chacon.

Canelo Alvarez's body of work was too much for Liam Smith (left) before a huge crowd at AT&T Stadium.

LESSON FOR FURY

So the sport suffers another big loss, Aaron Pryor. There's a career that had so much potential, but ultimately fizzled out.
Pryor was unbeaten, a puncher, dangerous, reeled off 10-15 punch combinations. He survived Alexis Arguello in the first fight and walked through him in the second. Yet there was one opponent that he couldn't overcome: himself. He blew greatness and ring immortality because he couldn't say no to cocaine. If there was ever a lesson to Tyson Fury about the perils of cocaine, then he should look no further than Aaron Pryor.

Paul Wickes
Holt, England

WHERE WAS PRYOR?

Perhaps you had a lot of distractions in your office when you put together your Top 10 Greatest Living Boxers (November 2016). How could you omit Aaron Pryor from this list? All he did in his career is have a nearly unblemished record (losing only to cocaine) with an amateur win over Thomas "Hitman" Hearns, a pro KO over Antonio Cervantes, two knockouts over a prime and then-thought-of-as-indestructible Alexis Arguello. And your media darling Sugar Ray Leonard ran and hid from Aaron at all costs because Pryor would have "given him another working over." Look at all the YouTube interviews of Pryor asking for a Leonard fight only to be denied because when they sparred it was "Hawk Time."

Thomas Filus
Arcola, Indiana

Editor's note: Mr. Filus sent us his thoughts on Pryor before we learned of his death.

TOO LATE FOR WARD

Sergey Kovalev is too strong and punches too hard for Andre Ward. Years ago it might have been different, but Ward squandered his prime during his regrettable layoff. I have watched his last few fights; he is slower, less mobile, gets hit more and is underpowered for a light heavyweight. Conclusion: Kovalev by KO.

Johnny Cockerham
Raynham, Massachusetts

ALI WENT TOO FAR

I don't want to disparage Muhammad Ali's abilities in the ring. The man was gifted beyond all belief. But, in my eyes, the way he treated Joe Frazier was unacceptable. Joe helped Ali out when he was down and out, giving him money and a place to stay. How does Ali thank Frazier? By continually talking down to him and insulting him each time they were in the same room. You could tell the words and actions hurt Joe. He never got over that and carried it to his grave. I understand Ali was trying to sell tickets and he was a so-called "ambassador" for African-Americans but treating a fellow African-American like utter trash puts a damper on Ali's appeal to me. Thanks to Ali we had to endure years of Floyd Mayweather's brashness and bravado as he was clearly modeled after Ali, including his claim of being "The Greatest." I would take Evander Holyfield for his quiet confidence, his will to succeed and his lack of trash-talking and letting his fists do the talking.

Jeffrey Cox
Salem, Virginia

REGRETTABLE ERROR

I have been a longtime subscriber to "The Bible of Boxing." The entire staff does an awesome job from cover to cover. You are indeed the "Bible of Boxing." I found an error in the November 2016 issue. On Page 59, a Cuban flag was inadvertently used to portray a Puerto Rican flag. Thank you for your continued dedication to the sweet science.

Kurt Carter
Union, New Jersey

Editor's note: Thank YOU Kurt for pointing out our mistake. The editors regret the error.

BHOP'S WISDOM

Great column by Bernard Hopkins on blacks turning away from boxing in the inner cities (December 2016). Hopkins speaks from the heart AND the gut, and the end product is scholarly prose. I look forward to reading more from Hopkins and getting more insight from someone who I consider a major voice in the boxing world today.

Chick DeCicco
Hammonton, New Jersey

AMATEURS DESERVING

Congratulations on the December issue of THE RING featuring Olympic boxing and the non-professionals of the sport who deserve great credit and acknowledgment for how they have attracted new generations to the sport as competitors and for fitness. British boxing is booming through our professionals but also the amateur ranks. Nicola Adams, whom THE RING features, is a perfect example of someone who has worked with discipline and dedication for many years. It has been great to be inspired by what they have achieved.

Ray Fox
Keighley, England

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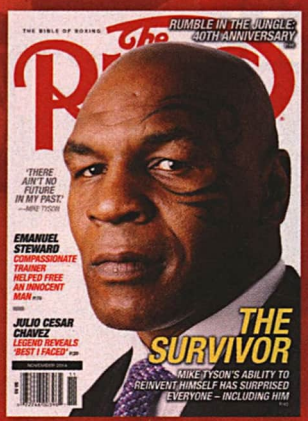

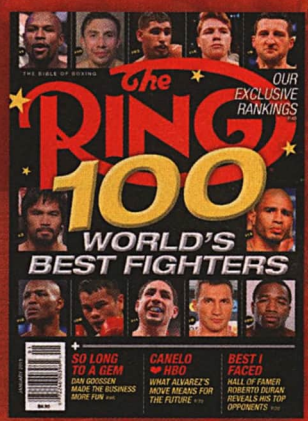

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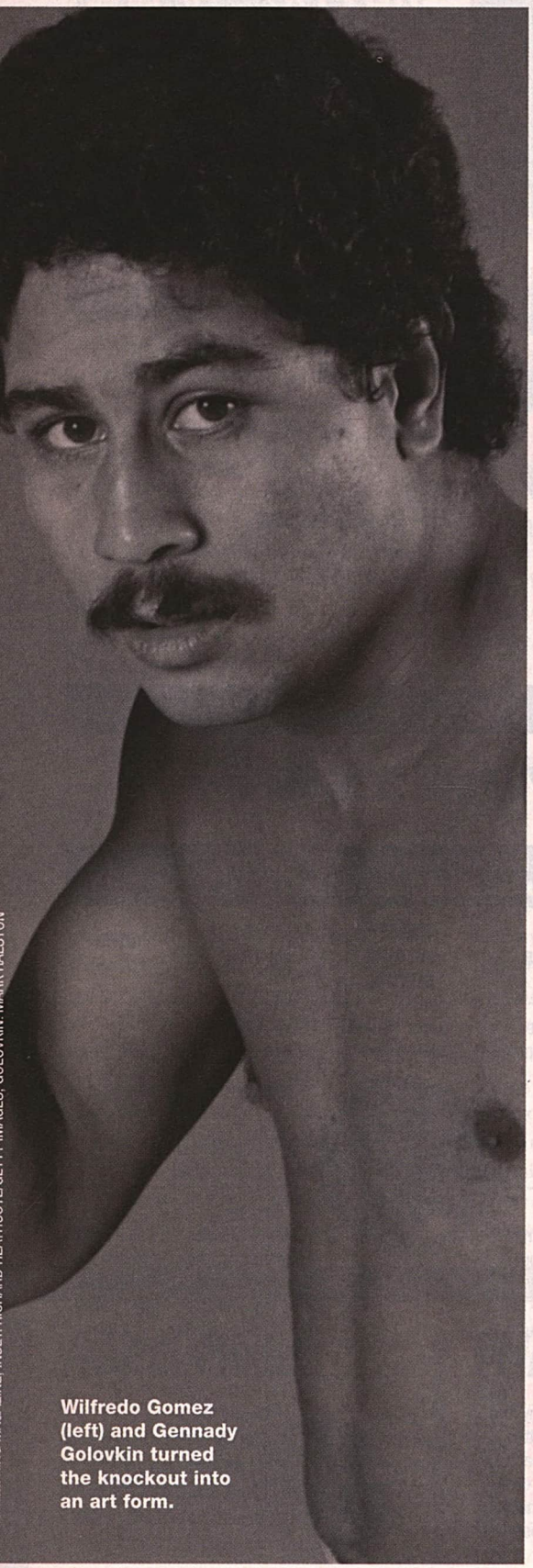
ADVANCED DEGREES



Wilfredo Gomez (left) and Gennady Golovkin turned the knockout into an art form.

Degrees of separation between fighters of the past and their more contemporary counterparts. This month, regular contributor Gregg Morgan points out that **Gennady Golovkin** is approaching **Wilfredo Gomez's** all-division record of 17 consecutive world title defenses by knockout when he stopped Kell Brook on Sept. 10. That was No. 12 in a row for Triple-G. Morgan linked Gomez and Golovkin in five steps.

WILFREDO GOMEZ
fought

Azumah Nelson,
who fought

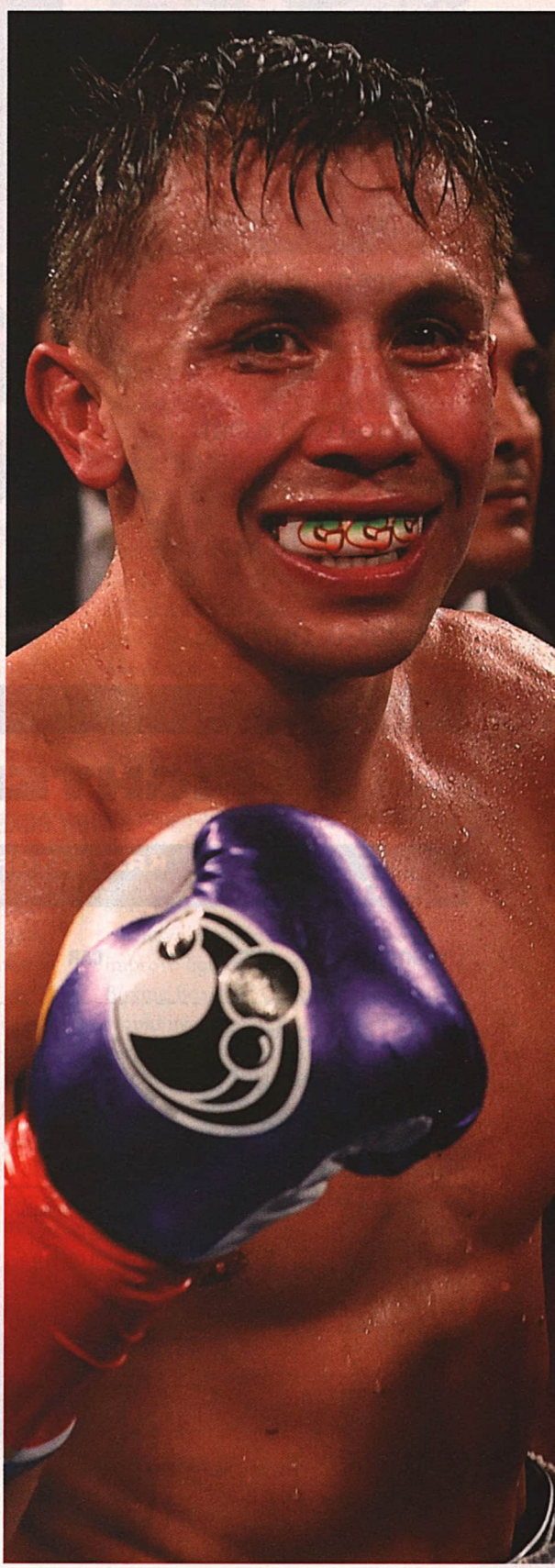
Pernell Whitaker,
who fought

Carlos Bojorquez,
who fought

Kassim Ouma,
who fought

GENNADY GOLOVKIN

Note: Golovkin has 17 consecutive title-defense KOs if you count his reign as the secondary WBA titleholder. THE RING recognizes only one WBA beltholder.



10 A MONTHLY BOXING LIST

This month: Everyone loves a puncher. And no one does it better than the fighters on this list. These men have the highest knockout percentages (knockouts per total fights) among those rated by THE RING. (In order of KO percentage.)

1T. 100.0 **JONATHAN GUZMAN** (22-0, 22 KOs)

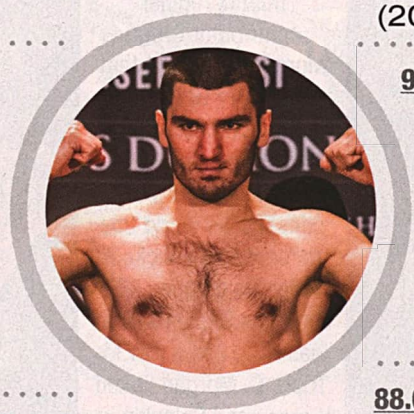
100.0 **ANTHONY JOSHUA** (17-0, 17 KOs)

100.0 **ARTUR BETERBIEV** (10-0, 10 KOs) »

100.0 **DAIGO HIGA** (10-0, 10 KOs)

5. 97.3 **DEONTAY WILDER** (37-0, 36 KOs)

6. 95.2 **YUNIER DORTICOS** (21-0, 20 KOs)



7. 91.7 **GENNADY GOLOVKIN** (36-0, 33 KOs)

8T. 90.0 **OSCAR VALDEZ** (20-0, 18 KOs)

90.0 **OLEKSANDR USYK** (10-0, 9 KOs)

10T. 88.0 **RICHARD COMMEY** (24-1, 22 KOs)

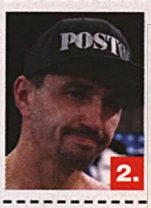
88.0 **LUIS ORTIZ** (25-0, 22 KOs)

88.0 **EDUARD TROYANOVSKY** (25-0, 22 KOs)

FIGHTERS' FAVORITES

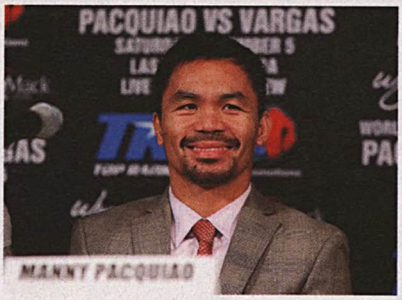
★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ WHAT BOXERS ARE INTO OUTSIDE THE SPORT ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

1. KRZYSZTOF GLOWACKI CRUISERWEIGHT CONTENDER / **2. VIKTOR POSTOL** JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHT CONTENDER / **3. DEJAN ZLATICANIN** LIGHTWEIGHT TITLEHOLDER

FIGHTER	MUSIC	CAR	FOOD	TATTOOS	ATHLETE OUTSIDE BOXING	MOVIE	VIDEO GAME
1.	**"Scorpions."**	"I drive an Audi. I don't have a dream car."	**"Healthy Polish and Italian cuisine."**	"I have one on my left bicep(s)."	**"Roger Federer (tennis player)."**	"'Spartacus.'"	"None."
 2.	"I'm a music lover, listening to the different styles, bands and artists."	"I have a Hyundai Santa Fe. My dream car is a Range Rover."	"I like any food, but mostly I prefer red fish, chops and cutlets."	"I do not have any, but I have in mind to make one – still thinking about it."	"Sergey Bubka (pole vaulter)."	"I like different movies … 'Warrior,' 'Wag the Dog,' the film with double meaning, similar to the situation which occurs in Ukraine."	"When I was a child I liked Super Mario. Now I don't have any time for it."
3.	"Rap and R&B."	"I drive a Mercedes C-Class. **My dream car is a Mercedes G-Class."**	"Seafood."	"I have on my arm a Maori tattoo, on my stomach a Tasmanian devil and on my neck I have a cross."	"Novak Djokovic (tennis player)."	**"'Rocky.'"**	"Super Mario."

— **Anson Wainwright**

THE BEST AND WORST IN BOXING FROM THE PAST MONTH By Michael Rosenthal



GOOD

The Conservative party in Norway had been working for a quarter century to end a ban on boxing in the Scandinavian country. They succeeded in December 2014, when the ban was lifted. No one was happier than **Cecilia Braekhus**, the undisputed No. 1 female boxer in the world. The 35-year-old had fought throughout Europe (and once in the U.S.) since turning pro in 2007 but never in her home country – until Oct. 1, when she faced veteran Anne Sophie Mathis at The Spectrum in Oslo. They called it "The Homecoming." And Braekhus didn't disappoint, stopping Mathis only 1 minute, 5 seconds into the second round to retain her world welterweight titles. Braekhus was joined in the ring immediately afterward by beaming Norwegian Prime Minister Erna Solberg, a Conservative. Some Norwegian politicians took offense that Solberg would take part is such a brutal event – one calling it "embarrassing, tragic and tasteless" – but she quite appropriately brushed them off. She was there to support Braekhus and celebrate the return of boxing to her country. We celebrate with her.

BAD

Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte has orchestrated an extrajudicial anti-drug crackdown that has left more than 3,000 alleged drug dealers and users dead in three months, raising concerns of human rights violations. And when world leaders have questioned Duterte's tactics to rid his country of drugs, he has lashed out at them. He called President Obama a "son of a whore" after the U.S. leader dared to criticize his crackdown. And Senator **Manny Pacquiao** publicly supports Duterte. He told PhilBoxing.com: "God put him there for a reason, for (a) purpose – to discipline the people. What Duterte is trying to do is let the people know – and put it in their heart and minds – that you need to respect the laws of the land." I understand that Duterte and Pacquiao are from the same region and they're political allies. And Pacquiao is grateful that Duterte helped support him when he was a young boxer. The problem is that what Duterte is doing amounts to mass murder, which deserves nothing but condemnation. Pacquiao lost favor internationally when earlier this year he said gay people "are worse than animals." His support of a man like Duterte further sullies the reputation of a fighter who was once beloved.

WORSE

Fatalities in boxing are rare but each instance is profoundly painful in the boxing community. Scottish fighter **Mike Towell** lost his life the day after he was knocked out by Dale Evans on Sept. 29 in Glasgow, the victim of a severe brain bleed. He was 25, had a young family, had his entire life in front of him. A heartbroken Evans said afterward: "I feel like I am responsible. I can't stop thinking about Mike and his poor family. All my thoughts are with them." Evans isn't to blame. It appears no one is. British authorities know what they're doing when it comes to fighter safety. It's simply impossible to provide the boxers foolproof protection in the most dangerous of sports. That said, it's crucial that authorities worldwide continue to seek ways to improve fighter safety. The British Boxing Board of Control indicated it would investigate the circumstances surrounding Towell's death. One thing they'll look at: He complained of headaches during preparation for his final fight. Perhaps the BBBofC will learn something that will help fighters going forward. Then something positive will have emerged from this tragedy.

RING POLL

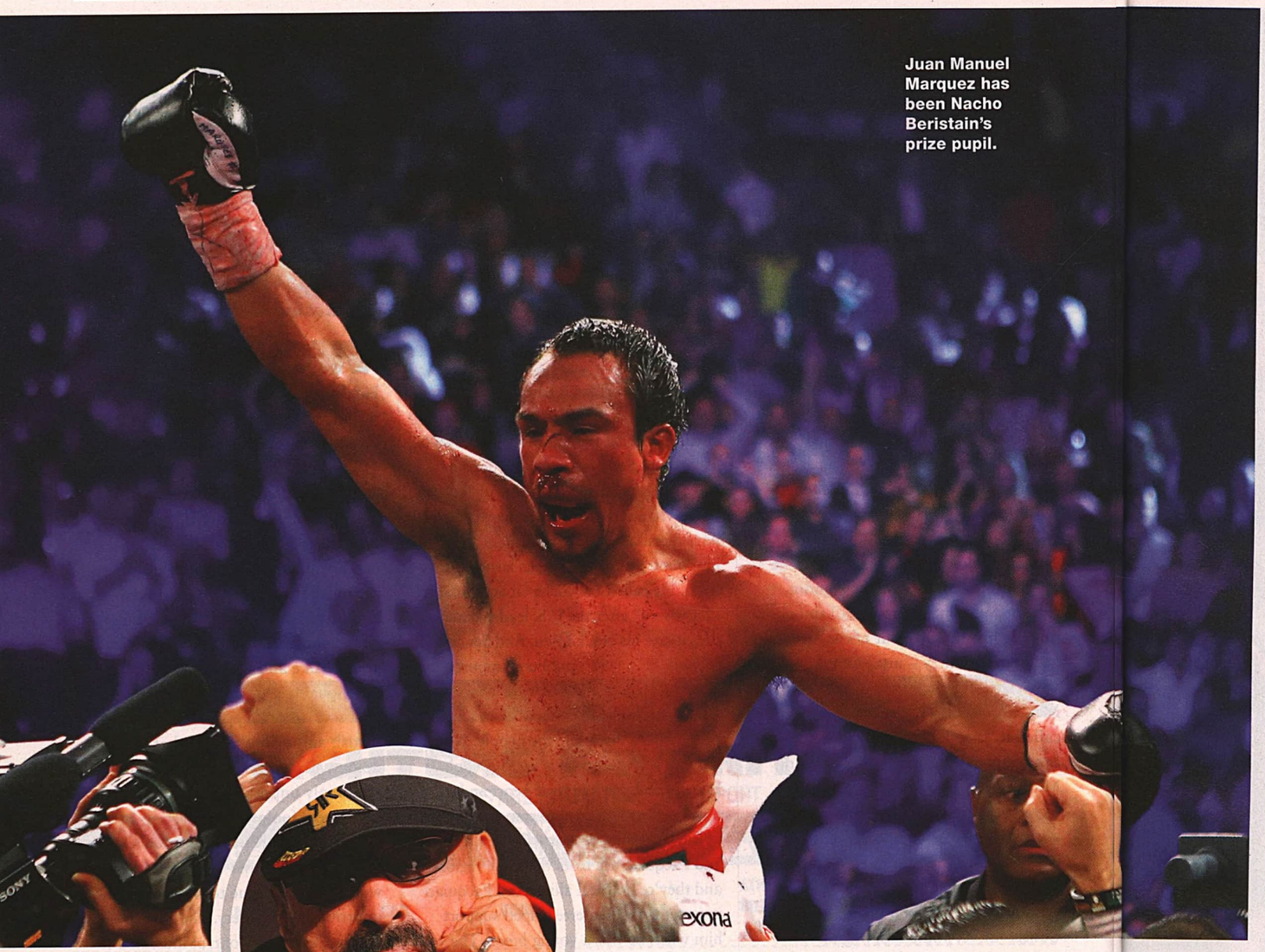
A MONTHLY POLL OF OUR RINGTV.COM READERS

All of us are looking for the next star. With that in mind, we asked: **Which of the fighters listed here is most likely to crack THE RING's pound-for-pound Top 10 in 2017?** Here is how you responded.

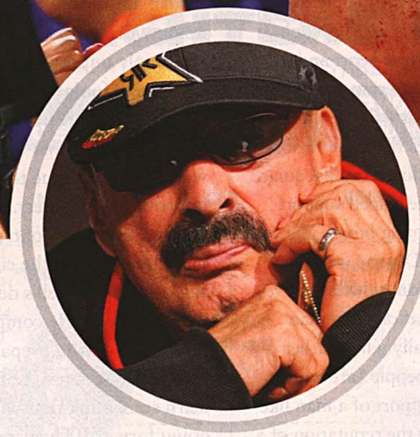
THE PERCENTAGES

28.04	ERROL SPENCE
15.12	MIKEY GARCIA
14.58	KEITH THURMAN
11.47	KELL BROOK
9.10	NAOYA INOUE
7.52	OLEKSANDR USYK
3.99	DEMETRIUS ANDRADE
3.95	JORGE LINARES
3.28	JUAN FRANCISCO ESTRADA
1.70	GARY RUSSELL JR.
0.66	RANCES BARTHELEMY
0.58	TAKUMA INOUE

NOTE: 2,407 READERS VOTED



Juan Manuel Marquez has been Nacho Beristain's prize pupil.



NACHO BERISTAIN

Ignacio "Nacho" Beristain has been one of the most successful trainers of his generation. He has worked with 26 world champions, including a who's who of Mexican boxers of the last quarter century.

Juan Manuel and Rafael Marquez, Daniel Zaragoza, Gilberto Roman, Chiquita Gonzalez, Ricardo Lopez and Jhonny Gonzalez all had Beristain in their corner. He even worked with Oscar De La Hoya for one fight.

"Don Nacho," as Beristain is known in Mexican circles, became interested in boxing as a child when his uncle took him to the gym.

He boxed as an amateur at junior flyweight and then had a short pro career – he estimates 17 fights – before retiring in 1959 because of an eye injury.

"I had some amateur and pro fights in my hometown of Veracruz," he said through an interpreter. "I loved to box but had a problem in my right eye that made me quit. That's why I started training kids."

Beristain learned the ropes working with Arturo "Cuyo" Hernandez, a legendary figure in Mexican boxing. They co-managed two-time featherweight champ Vicente Saldivar in the 1960s.

He worked with Mexican amateurs for three Olympic Games – 1968, 1976 and 1980 – guiding his countrymen to the medal stand five times. He traveled to Cuba during that time, such was his desire to improve and evolve his methods.

The first professional fighter to win a world title under Beristain's watch was Zaragoza, when he stopped fellow Hall of Famer Carlos Zarate in the 10th round in 1988. Beristain called that his "best win as a trainer."

"When Daniel Zaragoza beat Carlos Zarate in 1988 at the Forum in (Inglewood) California and conquered the WBC 122-pound world title, nobody believed he could pull that win off," he said.

Beristain built a gym in Mexico City in the early 1990s and called it "La Romanza." It was named after two of his fighters, Roman and Zaragoza. Since then it has been a champion factory.

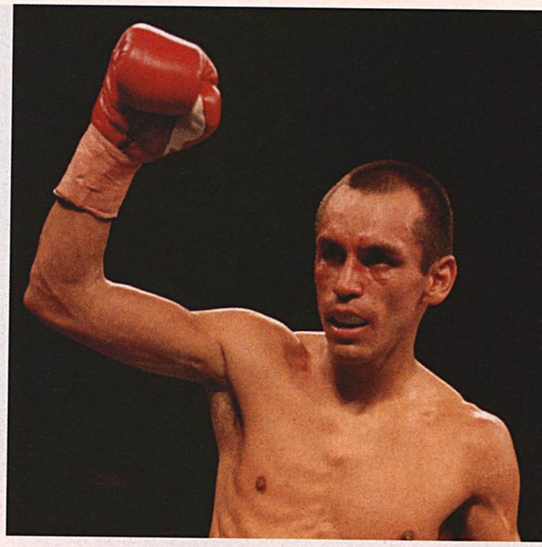
Still, Beristain said his days as an amateur coach are his proudest.

"Without a doubt I will always remember the Olympics," he said. "I was the trainer of the Mexican Olympic team in 1968, 1976 and 1980. My fighters Ricardo Delgado and Antonio Roldan won gold and Agustin Zaragoza (and Joaquin Rocha) won bronze (in 1968). (Juan Paredes won bronze in 1976.)

"Those were memorable days. After that I knew I would always live for boxing. Me and my team partner Vicente Torres are the only ones that are still alive to remember those glory days."

Beristain, 77, was inducted into the International Boxing Hall of Fame in 2011.

He took time out from his hectic schedule to speak to THE RING about the best fighters he has trained in 10 key areas.



Beristain cited Ricardo Lopez's quick hands.

BEST JAB
Juan Manuel Marquez: Clean, sharp, with huge power.

BEST CHIN
Daniel Zaragoza: His face was like iron. His opponents never found out that he couldn't take a punch to the stomach. That was funny!

FASTEST HANDS
Ricardo Lopez: (He could throw) 10 punches in a few seconds.

FASTEST FEET
Juan Manuel Marquez: He dominates the ring with his feet.

SMARTEST
Juan Manuel Marquez: He is very intelligent. He should be a trainer in the future because he sees and analyzes every detail of the opponents.

STRONGEST
Humberto "Chiquita" Gonzalez: His heart of stone is unbreakable.

BEST PUNCHER
Rafael Marquez: His hands were stones.

BEST DEFENSE
Gilberto Roman: He could block any punch coming at him.

BEST SKILLS
Juan Manuel Marquez: His technique is unique and represents the clear example of Mexican boxing.

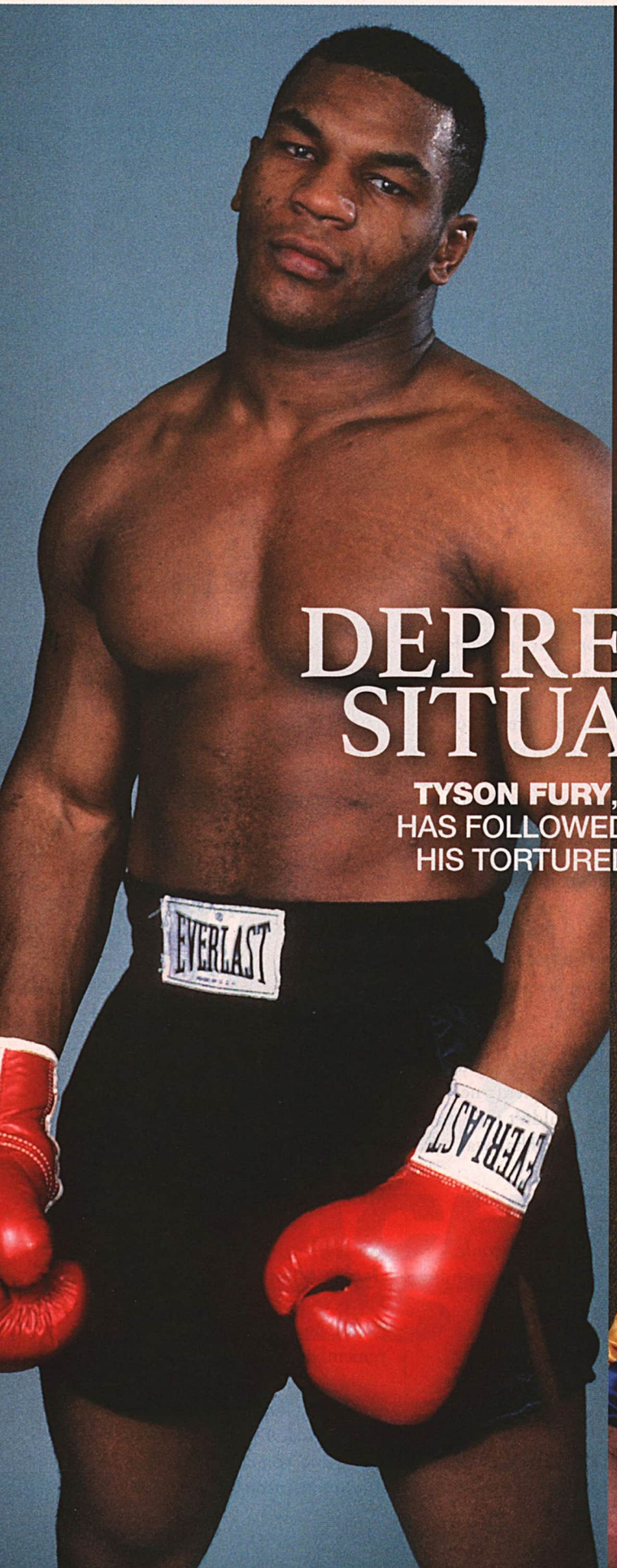
BEST OVERALL
Juan Manuel Marquez: His accomplishments and his wars with (Manny) Pacquiao will be remembered forever. RING

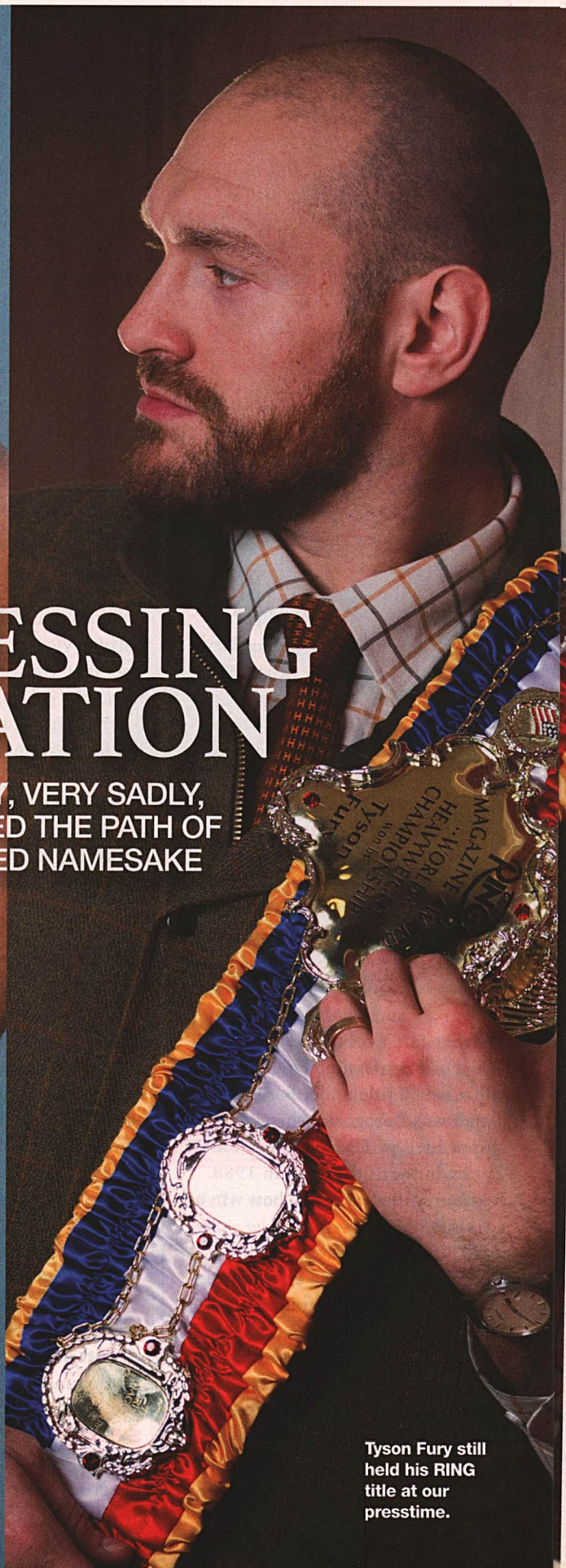
Questions and/or comments can be sent to Anson at elraincoat@live.co.uk and you can follow him on Twitter @AnsonWainwright

By David Greisman

DEPRESSING SITUATION

TYSON FURY, VERY SADLY, HAS FOLLOWED THE PATH OF HIS TORTURED NAMESAKE





Tyson Fury still held his RING title at our presstime.

He was the heavyweight champion. But he also used drugs, had mood swings that veered from one extreme to the other and was known for uttering offensive remarks without remorse. He was an undefeated fighter on a path of self-destruction who was essentially done by the age of 30.

He was Mike Tyson, who was just shy of 22 when he knocked out Michael Spinks in Atlantic City. A month and a half later and a few thousand miles across the pond, a boy was born to a family of fighters and named after the champ.

That boy was Tyson Fury. That boy is now a man who very well could be described in similar terms as his namesake.

Fury, too, became the heavyweight champion. He hasn't done anything anywhere near as serious as raping a woman. But his words and actions haven't helped to endear him with the public. Fury, 28, has made the headlines as often for what he's said out of the ring as he has for what he's done in it. He has been criticized for saying things construed as sexist, homophobic or anti-Semitic. He has used alcohol and cocaine to the extent that he is in no shape to fight.

In mid-October, he gave up his world titles.

And just as Mike Tyson could only blame himself, this situation is Fury's fault.

The bright spot in the coverage of Fury's ordeal, which followed him pulling out of a rematch with Wladimir Klitschko because doctors said he was medically unfit to fight, is that there has been plenty of sympathy for his mental health issues and plenty of wondering how much of what he's done can be connected to them.

As someone who struggled tremendously with depression when younger, I only want him to get better. He and his family deserve that, just as they deserve not to face the prejudice Fury described facing as a man of Traveller heritage living in the United Kingdom.

But Fury and his team have so far cast blame for his breakdown on not being embraced as much as he expected after outpointing Klitschko last November in Germany.

This from a man who admittedly attempted to go the villain route to draw attention and antipathy: "I'm making money so I don't really care," he said at one point. "You're either loved or hated. It all equals pound coins in the bank."

The victory over Klitschko was impressive, though more so in substance than in style. Fury dethroned the longtime champion, making Klitschko look lost in the ring, but he did so in a strategically awkward manner. He boxed carefully and it was boring. Fury landed just 86 punches in 12 rounds, including only 48 power shots. You don't win fans by landing just four power punches every three minutes. That's still better than Klitschko, who landed just 52 punches, including a mere 18 power shots. You don't win fights landing just one power shot every two minutes.

Fury was probably more loved than he thought. He just was too focused on the hate. Depression can be illogical at times yet nonetheless impactful.

But his comments to Rolling Stone answer some questions while raising others. We know more about his situation. Yet his claim of not training at all since May doesn't jibe with the fact that the Klitschko fight, which had once been scheduled for early July, was still on as of late June. It was postponed after Fury injured his ankle, which his team said occurred while running.

If Fury hadn't trained and was struggling with addiction and depression, then it made little sense for them to work on rescheduling the bout, announcing in early September that the fight was on for late October. Fury pulled out about two weeks later.

It's likely Fury and his team thought he could turn around, get out of his funk and off of the drugs, just as Mike Tyson and his entourage believed he could burn the candle at both ends, just as Kelly Pavlik and his camp believed he could hit the bottles and hit the bags simultaneously, and just as Johnny Manziel and his handlers believed he could be the life of the party and the starting quarterback of a pro football team.

Tyson, Pavlik and Manziel rightly deserved criticism for sabotaging their own careers. So, too, does Fury. Depression certainly may have played a role in his choices, but he still made them knowing what the consequences would be.

He just didn't care. That's not a surprise, given that he's spoken for some time of mulling retirement, of boxing not loving him and him not loving it back. It's to be commended that he sought treatment at the cost of the millions of dollars he would've earned to face Klitschko.

That's also why he vacated his WBA and WBO belts — "to allow him the time and space to fully recover," his promoter said in a statement. Then again, he may have faced sanctions anyway due to a pair of positive tests for cocaine. It's not a performance-enhancing drug when taken out of competition, but it's something for which he could still have been punished. He could have literally pissed away his world titles.

No matter the reason, everything he earned against Klitschko has now gone down the drain.

He won his titles without much offense. He has lost them without a single defense. RING

TIME AFTER TIME

THE CLOCK IN BOXING MARCHES ON MORE CONSISTENTLY THAN OTHER SPORTS

It's often said that boxing, despite the duplicity that surrounds it outside the ring, is the most honest sport. That contention stands what might be called the test of time.

In theory, a football game contains 60 minutes of action. But a Wall Street Journal study determined that, in an average National Football League contest, the ball is in play for only 11 minutes.

A similar study by the WSJ concluded that the average Major League Baseball game contains 17 minutes, 58 seconds of action.

NBA basketball delivers 48 minutes of actual play, plus free-throw shooting while the clock is stopped. But the last two minutes of a basketball game can take 20 minutes if the team that's losing intentionally fouls to stop the clock.

In boxing, a fighter who's behind late in a fight and fouls intentionally is penalized and sometimes disqualified. In basketball, the transgressor is sometimes rewarded.

Meanwhile, boxing's clock is constant. Three minutes of action in every round with a one-minute rest period in between. Unless, of course, a fight ends early because of a knockout.

Baseball doesn't have first-inning knockouts.

★★★

Premier Boxing Champions' boxing telecasts have highlighted a troubling trend. The men on the commentating teams come in all shapes and sizes from Marv Albert to Teddy Atlas. The women, for the most part, are packaged like models on assignment.

This phenomenon isn't limited to boxing. Savvy female sideline reporters like 50-year-old NBA-expert Doris Burke are few and far between. Many of Burke's sister commentators are better known for their appearance than their knowledge of the sports they cover. Bleacher Report once ran a feature entitled "50 Hottest Female Sports Broadcasters from Around the World."

But the problem is particularly acute in boxing, where many female hosts and reporters seem as though they've been prepped for little more than reading scripted lines and asking scripted questions.

Why is it that a certain type of look is a prerequisite for women to be behind a microphone in boxing but the same requirement doesn't exist for men?

Just asking.

★★★

Ten years ago, an Iowa attorney named Adam Pollack wrote a biography of John L. Sullivan that was published by McFarland & Company. Pollack subsequently authored biographies of James J. Corbett, Bob Fitzsimmons, Marvin Hart, Tommy Burns and Jack Johnson that were published under his own Win by KO imprint. But something stuck in his craw.

"'John L. Sullivan' was my first book," Pollack recently told this writer. "And 10 years later, I felt that I could do a better job. I'm a better researcher now than I was then. I'm a better writer now than I was then. And McFarland wouldn't let me use all the photos I wanted in the first book, which bothered me because I think you need photos to bring Sullivan to life."

Pollack has now published a revised biography of Sullivan. The book has more than 200 photos, including original Police Gazette artwork from the 1880s. That's important to Pollack because, in his words, "It's what you would have seen if you were following Sullivan 125 years ago. And it enables you to understand more fully how boxing became a national sport and Sullivan became America's first sports superstar."

Pollack's revised work is also better written than its predecessor and more

detailed with regard to Sullivan's personal life and several of his more important fights.

★★★

Also from the bookshelf ...

Alfonso Teofilo Brown was born into horrendous poverty in Panama in 1902. At age 21, he boarded a vessel in the Canal Zone as a stowaway, was pressed into service peeling potatoes after he was discovered and jumped ship in New York (then the capital of the boxing world).

During the course of a 20-year ring career, "Panama Al" compiled a record of 129-19-13. In 161 fights, he was never knocked out. He was freakishly tall (5 feet 11 inches) for a bantamweight and was boxing's first Hispanic world champion. Complicating his life, he was gay.

"Black Ink," by Jose Corpas, (Win by KO Publications) tells the story of Brown's life.

Boxing was a different world then. As Corpas recounts, "Eyes were thumbed, kidneys were pounded and laces were dragged across faces until blood flowed. A coddled prospect being fed a steady diet of carefully selected stiffs on the way to a 20-and-0 record was virtually nonexistent and impressed no one the few times it occurred. Fighters fought whoever was available."

Social customs were different too. Brown spent most of his adult life with one foot in and one foot out of the closet. He lived for a time in Paris (where the French writer Jean Cocteau was his lover and manager), spent profligately on clothes and developed a fondness for betting on horses.

He was often instructed to carry opponents, lest it become too difficult for him to get fights.

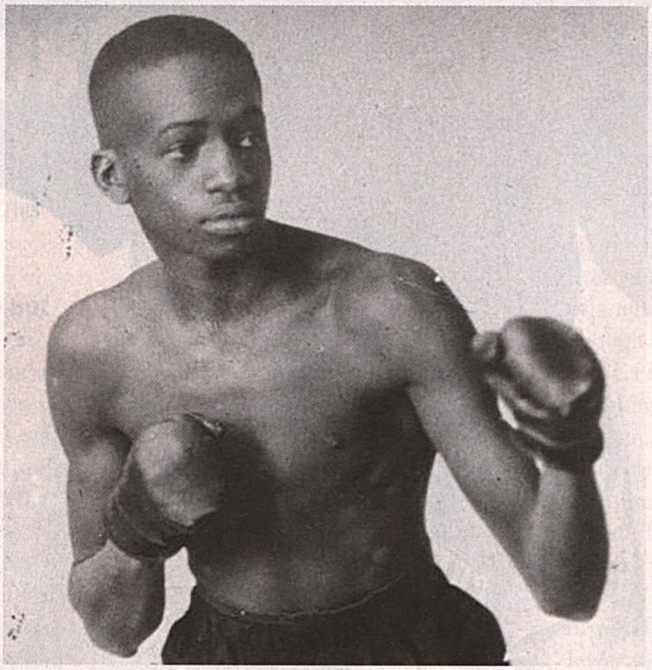
Brown's ring career was marred by heavy drinking that evolved to cocaine and heroin use. He contracted syphilis and, later in life, was arrested multiple times for drug-related and other criminal offenses. During his final years, he lived homeless on the streets of New York. He died in 1951 at age 48.

Corpas has researched his subject extensively, particularly in online newspaper archives throughout the world. His writing is a bit sloppy at times, and Brown's many fights tend to blur together in the recounting. But the book has a powerful undercurrent.

"It wasn't just the money that drove Brown," Corpas writes. "The feeling that consumed him when the bell rang had no price. When the bell rang, he was chief, king, the boss. And everyone watching knew it. For someone who was often told that he should be ashamed of who he was, that feeling of superiority was addictive. The respect and awe his ring dominance earned him spilled out into the cabarets and streets, where Brown was often the richest, most famous and toughest man in the room. When he couldn't box, he was a poor, skinny, gay drunk."

But the inevitable happened.

"With each work of art," Corpas observes, "he left a piece of himself in the ring. When he climbed out of the ring for the last time, there was almost nothing left."



Panama Al Brown left everything in the ring.

★★★

Cleaning out old files is an adventure. I never know what I'll find. Recently, I was going through some notes on a telephone conversation I had with Dan Goossen years ago.

"I'm sitting here with Pete Rose," Goossen said proudly.

That piqued my interest because, among other things, I'd heard that Rose participated in several amateur fights when he was young. So Dan put Pete on the phone, and I asked Major League Baseball's all-time career hits leader about his ring exploits.

"I was 14 years old," Rose told me. "I had two fights and lost them both. The second one was against a guy who had five kids at ringside watching. I didn't get knocked out. But I did say to myself, 'I better go play ball.'" RING

Thomas Hauser can be reached by email at thauser@rcn.com. His most recent book – "A Hard World: An Inside Look at Another Year in Boxing" – was published recently by the University of Arkansas Press. In 2004, the Boxing Writers Association of America honored Hauser with the Nat Fleischer Award for career excellence in boxing journalism.

By **Bernard Hopkins, as told to Joseph Santoliquito**

Bernard Hopkins is proud of the legacy he built in boxing.

'I'M LANDING IN A NICE PLACE'

BERNARD HOPKINS HAS SOME FIGHT LEFT IN HIM BUT IS TRANSITIONING TO AN EXCITING FUTURE

This is one in a series of columns by future Hall of Famer Bernard Hopkins, who gives us his thoughts on various subjects important to every boxer and fan. This issue: retirement.

I know the time is coming but I've had a lot of good practice on being patient. I'm willing to wait a little longer before I finally retire. I think I'm ready, though. I don't want to be one of those fighters that looks back in time and questions whether I retired too late or, believe it or not, too soon. I'm going to be 52 on January 15, 2017, and I still feel I'm in great shape, good enough to beat almost every light heavyweight contender in the world.

I know I can leave being very proud of what I've done. If I had one regret, it may be that I retired too late. But boxing is a part of me. It's something that I'll never get out of my body. To me, it's a way of life. Even when I'm retired, I'll still come to the gym. I'll still run and watch my diet. I love the sport. It saved my life. I also think, looking back, that what I've done and the example I've left has inspired others.

I live right and I eat right. I have 2.5 percent body fat.

It's a B-Hop lifestyle. I don't see myself stopping any time soon when the "Final 1" comes. That's going to be the name of my last fight. I feel real good where my life is headed after I retire. I'm involved with HBO.

Bernard Hopkins was hoping to have his hand raised one more time in a December farewell fight. No details were confirmed by our deadline.

I'm set with Golden Boy and our new contract. The first contract I had was 11 years of building a brand and who I am outside of the ring. Golden Boy was supposed to be out of business so many different times, when this guy emerged and that company emerged. Well, here we are, still standing, like a fighter who can take a punch and still come at you with everything he has.

I know Oscar De La Hoya, Eric Gomez and Robert Diaz all have my back. I call them soldiers because there is no limit to what they can do. Every last one of them has come from the ground up. Our company is set, my broadcasting career is taking shape.

I'm putting as much into that as I do when I'm getting ready for a fight. I go to a speech coach twice a month. She's very experienced and she works with other former athletes who have made that crossover from sports into broadcasting. She not only helped with my speech, she's helped me with preparation. I'm not in competition with Jim Lampley or Max Kellerman because they're legends in the business. They have my back, too. They're experts, and when I look at Jim and Max, I ask them all of the time what I can do differently and what can I provide the audience that maybe they can't see. I want to be able to tell an audience a story and teach in the short segment that I have what they're seeing in the ring.

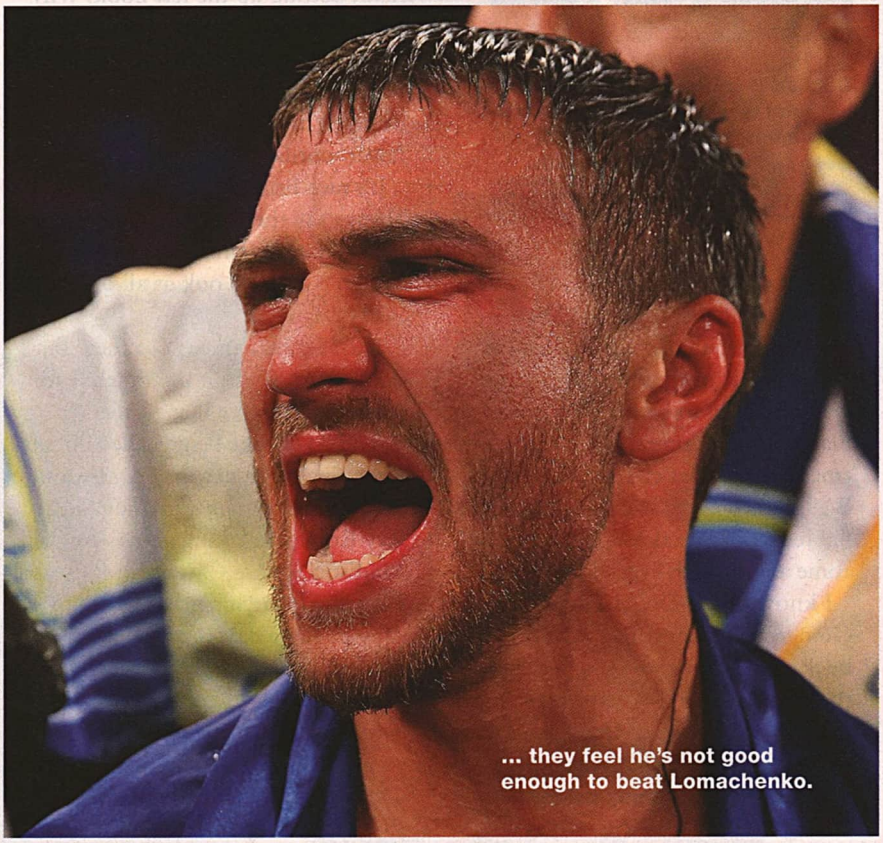
I really like doing that. I like breaking down the technical aspects of a fight. I've been doing it long enough to where my eye is trained for it. I like telling the audience watching why a right hand is being thrown and why the right hand is not actually doing the damage, but is really setting up the left hook. Why the left hook wipes his nose, not smacks you across the face. I want to be clear and concise. Yeah, believe it or not, I'm learning to put things into fewer words.

It's nice being in this position. I always say the one thing you can't beat is nature. Time was going to catch up to me. Look at all of this salt in my beard.

The Hall of Fame is out there but I don't think about it too much. I still have a tough time being called "a legend." I do like being called an icon. I'm going to go out the way I want to go out. I remember watching Sugar Ray Robinson taking a final bow at Madison Square Garden and it was emotional watching that. I said to myself, "One day, that's going to be me. I want to be celebrated like that. I have to leave my mark on boxing." That was 20 years ago. I will do my four bows. I know I'm landing in a nice place. I planned for the time that's in front of me.

Our experts believe Guillermo Rigondeaux is very good but ....

RIGONDEAUX VS. LOMACHENKO


... they feel he's not good enough to beat Lomachenko.

THREE EXPERTS – A FIGHTER, A TRAINER AND A MEDIA MEMBER – TELL YOU HOW A MYTHICAL MATCHUP WOULD PLAY OUT

If the mythical King Midas was a boxing fan, then this all-southpaw collision would be made for him.

Since the turn of the new century, virtually everything that Guillermo Rigondeaux and Vasyl Lomachenko have touched has turned to gold. Both double Olympic champions, both world titleholders inside 10 fights and both blessed with glistening skillsets.

Rigondeaux is a reigning junior featherweight titleholder and is rated No. 1 at 122 pounds by THE RING. The almost-invisible Cuban is too good for his own good, meaning he has had a nightmare securing a big fight since he dominated the superb Nonito Donaire in an April 2013 unification clash.

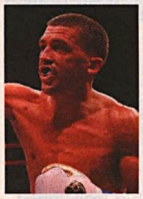
The equally dazzling Lomachenko fought for a world title in only his second professional bout and, although he dropped a split decision to Orlando Salido in March 2014, he has never looked back. He is a two-weight titleholder after beating Gary Russell Jr. and Roman Martinez at 126 and 130 pounds, respectively.

A bout between the fellow pound-for-pound stars was briefly discussed last summer but they could not reach a concrete agreement on weight. Likely confined to fantasy, THE RING discussed with three boxing luminaries what would transpire in this solid gold superfight.

RIGONDEAUX ★ TALE OF THE TAPE ★ LOMACHENKO

122-130 POUNDS

RIGONDEAUX		LOMACHENKO
36	AGE	28
17-0 (11 KOS)	RECORD	6-1 (4 KOS)
64.7	KO PERCENTAGE	57.1
SOUTHPAW	STANCE	SOUTHPAW
5-FOOT-4 (162 CM)	HEIGHT	5-FOOT-6 (168 CM)
68 INCHES (173 CM)	REACH	65.5 INCHES (166 CM)

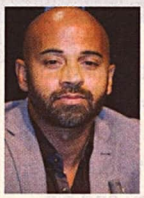


FIGHTER

LEE SELBY
IBF featherweight titleholder

Rigondeaux has great boxing ability, timing and grit. What he does lack, though, and what would come into play against Lomachenko, is work rate. Rigondeaux likes to sit back and counter, whereas Lomachenko will force the pace. He's prepared to throw the first punch and would look to counter Rigondeaux's counter. For me, Lomachenko is pound-for-pound Top 5, or even Top 3. He's broken records as an amateur and now he's breaking records as a professional. Rigondeaux is still fresh because he doesn't take a lot of shots but he's been very inactive in recent years and he's 36 years old now. He's a fighter who relies on timing and reflexes, and age will affect Rigondeaux more than someone who relies on strength and punch. It's the kind of fight that would be competitive early on but as soon as Lomachenko picks up the pace, he would take over the fight. I think, with the youth and natural weight advantage, Lomachenko could force a late stoppage.

WINNER: Lomachenko



TRAINER

DAVE COLDWELL
Trainer of Tony Bellew and Jamie McDonnell

Rigondeaux is extremely slick. He's got super speed, great footwork and balance, and he knows how to use those attributes to his advantage. Lomachenko is the better punch-picker; his shot selection and skills are fantastic and his feet are just phenomenal. If you have great feet and a great brain, then you can figure out any problem in a boxing ring and shut down the movers. Like (Julio Cesar) Chavez, Lomachenko can cut the ring down and put you in the positions where he wants you to be. Rigondeaux's inactivity could also play a part and when he does get tagged, he has the tendency to go over. I can see it being Rigo's fight early on, but Lomachenko seems to adjust very well. Rigondeaux likes to box at his own pace and you can't allow that so, if the two ever met, I wouldn't expect Lomachenko to stand off him. I think if you can take away the speed of Rigondeaux, then he's there to be hit. For me, with the brain of Lomachenko, and the fact that he stays active, I have to favor him over 12 rounds.

WINNER: Lomachenko

MEDIA MEMBER

PAULIE MALIGNAGGI
Showtime analyst and former titleholder

Stylistically, it's a beautiful matchup between two of the best pure boxers in the sport. Rigondeaux has unbelievable control of distance and he's able to make world class opponents feel like they have their hands in their pockets. You only have to look at his fight against Nonito Donaire for evidence. If Rigondeaux doesn't want to get hit, then he won't get hit all night – that's the type of quality he has. Lomachenko is more explosive and has more killer instinct. He is obviously the more exciting fighter but people always make the mistake of putting excitement in the same category as effectiveness. The two never go hand in hand. The excitement Lomachenko brings might actually make him more susceptible to being hit because you can't overstay your welcome against Rigondeaux or he'll make you pay. I actually think Rigondeaux is a better fighter, but size matters and Lomachenko would have a distinct advantage in that area. Even though they're only eight pounds apart, Lomachenko is bursting at the seams at 130 pounds whereas Rigondeaux is making 122 quite easily.

WINNER: Lomachenko

FURY VACATES TITLES, STILL RING CHAMP – FOR NOW

Tyson Fury announced as this issue of THE RING Magazine was going to press that he was vacating his WBA and WBO heavyweight titles to focus on resolving his personal problems. Fury admitted after failing a drug test that he has taken cocaine to deal with depression.

The British fighter has also held the RING championship since he outpointed Wladimir Klitschko in November 2015.

"I'm unable to defend at this time and I have taken the hard and emotional decision to now officially vacate my treasured world titles and wish the next in-line contenders all the very best as I now enter another big challenge in my life which I know, like against Klitschko, I will conquer," Fury said in a statement.

THE RING editors considered stripping him of the magazine title but decided against it for the time being.

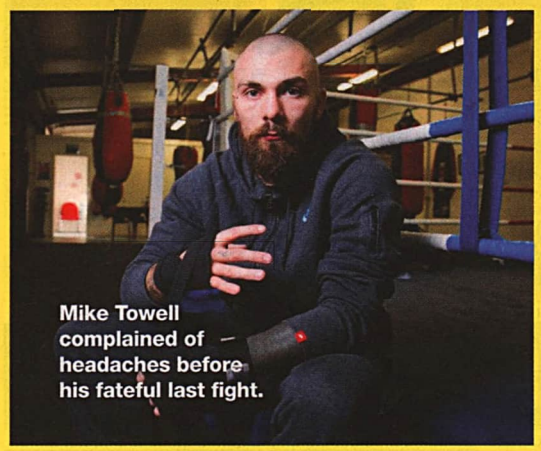
One reason is that he has until May 28, 2017, to schedule or have a title defense, as per our championship policy. It's not clear how long Fury will be away from the sport.

Also, although Fury's decision to vacate his titles and strong statement are important factors, we felt it was important to consider all aspects of this situation before stripping him of the lineal championship.

All that said, it's possible that Fury will no longer be THE RING heavyweight champion by the time you read this.

Please follow this evolving situation on RingTV.com. And see Pages 16 and 80 of this issue for more on Fury.

– Michael Rosenthal



Mike Towell complained of headaches before his fateful last fight.

WAS TRAGEDY AVOIDABLE?

The revelation that Scottish boxer **Mike Towell** complained of headaches in the weeks before his death, which occurred after he fought **Dale Evans** on Sept. 29, has raised questions of whether the tragedy could've been prevented.

Promoter **Alex Morrison**, who owns the gym in Glasgow's East End where Towell trained, told The (London) Sun that Towell broke off one of his sparring sessions just weeks ahead of the bout due to the pain.

"He was sparring with a guy called **Stewart Burt** but he stopped because of the headache," Morrison told The Sun. "I never paid attention as he looked OK. When he told the guys he wasn't feeling too good, they advised him not to box."

Towell went through with the fight anyway and his handlers evidently never mentioned the headache, The Guardian reported. But Towell's partner of eight years, **Chloe Ross**, wrote on Facebook following his death that the 25-year-old welterweight had grumbled about headaches – concerns that were dismissed as anxiety and tension before his bout.

Towell (11-1-1, 8 knockouts) was stopped in the fifth round and removed from the ring on a stretcher at the Radisson Blu Hotel in Glasgow. He died the next day.

"I'm absolutely heartbroken to say my annoying best friend passed away tonight at 11.02 very peacefully," Ross wrote. "Michael had severe bleeding and swelling to his brain. He had been complaining of headaches for the last few weeks but we put it down to migraines with the stress of the fight."

The British Boxing Board of Control, which sanctioned the bout, did not immediately reply to an email for comment. It announced it would investigate the circumstances that led to his death.

Floyd "Money" Mayweather Jr. might not be quite as wealthy if a lawsuit filed by a Las Vegas jewelry company has merit.

Mayweather is accused of bilking The Jewelers, Inc. out of $1.4 million for a diamond-encrusted necklace he picked up just days after his final fight, against **Andre Berto** in September 2015, according to a lawsuit filed in Nevada state court.

It's not known whether Mayweather or his reps were served with the civil lawsuit, which was filed on Sept. 23 in Clark County District Court in Las Vegas, according to the Associated Press. Mayweather confidante **Leonard Ellerbe** and attorney **Mark Tratos** didn't respond to messages for comment.

The jewelry company indicated in court documents that Mayweather shelled out $1 million for the $3 million necklace, which has 72 round-cut diamonds, in September 2015. Mayweather subsequently made six payments of $100,000 each and then stopped, according to the lawsuit.

Mayweather can certainly afford the price of the necklace. Forbes listed him as the highest-paid paid athlete for 2015 with earnings of around $300 million. He also headed the same list in 2012 and 2014.

The lawsuit is the second in 11 years against Mayweather for alleged failure to make payments for jewelry. "Records show that a 2005 civil action filed by another jeweler alleging that he failed to pay $124,000 for more than 20 pieces of jewelry was settled in 2006," the AP reported. "The terms were not disclosed."

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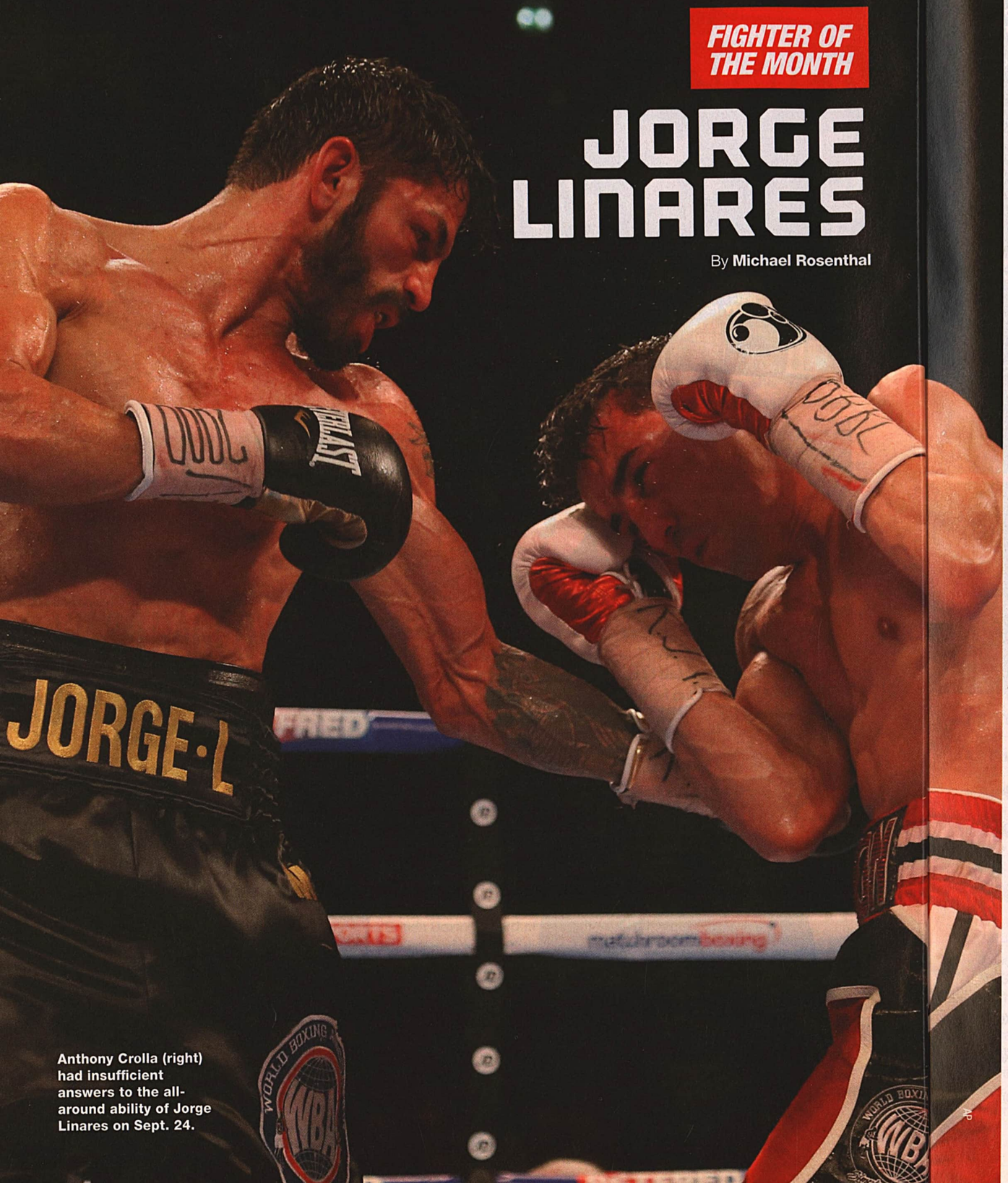


Anthony Crolla (right) had insufficient answers to the all-around ability of Jorge Linares on Sept. 24.

FIGHTER OF THE MONTH

JORGE LINARES

By **Michael Rosenthal**

Jorge Linares reminded us against Anthony Crolla just how talented he is.

Crolla, a strong, disciplined fighter, stalked Linares from the opening bell and had his moments in front of a passionate crowd Sept. 24 in Manchester, England, Crolla's hometown. But he couldn't match the Venezuelan's skills and quickness, which made his task extremely difficult. The local lad was good, Linares was special.

The fluidity of Linares' movement – combined with his hand and foot speed – was particularly impressive; he's beautiful to watch. And he isn't a pitty-pat puncher; he aims to hurt you, as Crolla found out when a hard right wobbled him in Round 6.

Crolla marched on but simply took more than he gave. Two of the judges were too generous to the hometown fighter: Linares won unanimously 115-114, 115-113 and 117-111, meaning the fight probably would 've ended as a split draw had Linares not hurt Crolla in a round he was losing.

But the right man won. I had it 116-112 (eight rounds to four) for Linares, who definitely earned the RING lightweight championship and WBA belt.

A rematch makes a lot of sense given the competitive nature of the first fight and the money Linares-Crolla II would generate.

If it happens, Crolla had better hope that the Linares who showed up on Sept. 24 is nowhere to be found. Otherwise the result of the rematch could be just as frustrating for the game Englishman as the original was.

In short, Linares has never looked better. RING

RATINGS ANALYSIS

POUND FOR POUND: No change.

HEAVYWEIGHTS: Joseph Parker's reputation improved, as did his rating (from No. 7 to No. 6), after a third-round knockout of Alexander Dimitrenko (unrated).

CRUISERWEIGHTS: In just his 10th pro fight, Oleksandr Usyk crushed Krzysztof Glowacki on the cards to take Glowacki's title in Poland – his victim's home country. That performance lifted Usyk from No. 7 to No. 3 and dropped Glowacki from No. 3 to No. 5.

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS: Though it shows no signs of doing so in real life, the clock ran out for Bernard Hopkins in the ratings after nearly two years without a fight and nothing definite in sight. He was dropped from his No. 3 perch and the resulting shift left room for undefeated Ukrainian Oleksandr Gvozdyk at No. 10. Juergen Braehmer fell from No. 5 to No. 10 after losing to Nathan Cleverly (unrated last month), who came in at No. 9. Gvozdyk was pushed out in the process.

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS: No change.

MIDDLEWEIGHTS: No change.

JUNIOR MIDDLEWEIGHTS: After his ninth-round knockout of then-titleholder Liam Smith (No. 8 last month), Canelo Alvarez pulled a Mayweather and became the only active fighter to be ranked in two divisions, settling in at No. 1 above Erislandy Lara. The only damage to Smith (on this list anyway) was that he was pushed down a notch along with everyone else by Canelo's arrival. As the unlucky No. 10 at the time, Germany's Jack Culcay dropped out.

WELTERWEIGHTS: No change.

JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHTS: No change.

LIGHTWEIGHTS: Richard Commey (No. 7 last month) and Robert Easter Jr. (No. 9 last month) vied for a vacant title and it was Easter who came out on top with a split decision. He climbed to No. 6 while Commey held his position, which knocked Sharif Bogere from No. 6 down to No. 8. Two weeks later, No. 1 Jorge Linares and No. 3 Anthony Crolla fought for the vacant RING championship in Manchester, England, and Linares bested the hometown kid by unanimous decision. Crolla gave up his sanctioning-body title and dropped to No. 4. With Linares' ascension and the departure of No. 5-ranked Rances Barthelemy, who headed up to 140, two vacancies opened at No. 9 and No. 10. They were filled by Russia's Petr Petrov and Louisiana native Mason Menard, respectively.

JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHTS: No change.

FEATHERWEIGHTS: No change.

JUNIOR FEATHERWEIGHTS: Hozumi Hasegawa blasted from the past straight into Hugo Ruiz's face to score a ninth-round TKO and win a world title in a third division. The 35-year-old warrior also took the No. 7 spot from Ruiz, who dropped out of the ratings.

BANTAMWEIGHTS: Shinsuke Yamanaka (No. 1 last month) was crowned RING champion after emphatically winning the rematch with No. 2-ranked Anselmo Moreno, who dropped to No. 5. With everybody moving up, Pungluang Sor Singyu, who lost a war with No. 6-ranked Marlon Tapales his last time out, was brought back in at No. 10.

JUNIOR BANTAMWEIGHTS: Roman Gonzalez immigrated from 112 and wasted no time with introductions, arriving at No. 2 with a title-winning unanimous decision over Carlos Cuadras (No. 2 at the time). Cuadras fell to No. 3 and the downward shift pushed No. 10 Takuma Inoue off the list.

FLYWEIGHTS: Johnriel Casimero (No. 4 last month) stopped Charlie Edwards (unrated) to retain his title and climbed one notch to No. 3. Donnie Nietes made his debut at 112 and assumed the No. 4 position by shutting out Edgar Sosa (No. 7 last month), who dropped out. Gonzalez emigrated to 115 and vacated the RING flyweight championship while Juan Francisco Estrada (No. 1 last month) also vacated his titles to follow his nemesis north. The resulting emptiness at No. 10 was filled by Japan's Daigo Higa.

JUNIOR FLYWEIGHTS: No change.

STRAWWEIGHTS: No change.

Pound-for-pound No. 1 Roman Gonzalez (left) had to dig deep to beat Carlos Cuadras in Gonzalez's first fight as a full-fledged 115-pounder.

THE FIGURES UNDER THE FIGHTERS' NAMES INDICATE: WEEKS IN THE RATINGS • COUNTRY • RECORD

HEAVYWEIGHTS
WEIGHT UNLIMITED

C TYSON FURY
242 • U.K. • 25-0-0 (18 KOs)

1. WLADIMIR KLITSCHKO
594 • Ukraine • 64-4-0 (53 KOs)

2. DEONTAY WILDER
150 • U.S. • 37-0-0 (36 KOs)

3. KUBRAT PULEV
260 • Bulgaria • 23-1-0 (12 KOs)

4. LUIS ORTIZ
42 • Cuba • 25-0-0 (22 KOs)

5. ANTHONY JOSHUA
49 • U.K. • 17-0-0 (17 KOs)

6. JOSEPH PARKER
26 • New Zealand • 21-0-0 (18 KOs)

7. BERMANE STIVERNE
180 • Canada • 25-2-1 (21 KOs)

8. BRYANT JENNINGS
133 • U.S. • 19-2-0 (10 KOs)

9. DAVID HAYE
21 • U.K. • 28-2-0 (26 KOs)

10. ANDY RUIZ JR.
18 • Mexico • 29-0-0 (19 KOs)

CRUISERWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 200 LBS

C (VACANT)

1. GRIGORY DROZD
157 • Russia • 40-1-0 (28 KOs)

2. DENIS LEBEDEV
349 • Russia • 29-2-0 (22 KOs)

3. OLEKSANDR USYK
53 • Ukraine • 10-0-0 (9 KOs)

4. TONY BELLEW
20 • U.K. • 27-2-1 (17 KOs)

5. KRZYSZTOF GLOWACKI
60 • Poland • 26-1-0 (16 KOs)

6. MARCO HUCK
239 • Germany • 39-3-1 (27 KOs)

7. FIRAT ARSLAN
205 • Germany • 38-8-2 (23 KOs)

8. MAIRIS BRIEDIS
32 • Latvia • 20-0-0 (17 KOs)

9. ILUNGA MAKABU
169 • Congo • 19-2-0 (18 KOs)

10. YUNIER DORTICOS
20 • Cuba • 21-0-0 (20 KOs)

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 175 LBS

C (VACANT)

1. SERGEY KOVALEV
194 • Russia • 30-0-1 (26 KOs)

2. ADONIS STEVENSON
174 • Canada • 28-1-0 (23 KOs)

3. ELEIDER ALVAREZ
134 • Colombia • 20-0-0 (10 KOs)

4. ANDRE WARD
28 • U.S. • 30-0-0 (15 KOs)

5. ARTUR BETERBIEV
95 • Russia • 10-0-0 (10 KOs)

6. ISAAC CHILEMBA
232 • Malawi • 24-4-2 (10 KOs)

7. VYACHESLAV SHABRANSKYY
42 • Ukraine • 17-0-0 (14 KOs)

8. JOE SMITH JR.
16 • U.S. • 22-1-0 (18 KOs)

9. NATHAN CLEVERLY
1 • U.K. • 30-3-0 (16 KOs)

10. JUERGEN BRAEHMER
223 • Germany • 48-3-0 (35 KOs)

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 168 LBS

C (VACANT)

1. JAMES DEGALE
174 • U.K. • 23-1-0 (14 KOs)

2. BADOU JACK
76 • Sweden • 20-1-2 (12 KOs)

3. GILBERTO RAMIREZ
117 • Mexico • 34-0-0 (24 KOs)

4. GEORGE GROVES
252 • U.K. • 24-3-0 (18 KOs)

5. ANDRE DIRRELL
110 • U.S. • 25-2-0 (16 KOs)

6. CALLUM SMITH
70 • U.K. • 21-0-0 (16 KOs)

7. ANTHONY DIRRELL
112 • U.S. • 29-1-1 (23 KOs)

8. ARTHUR ABRAHAM
365 • Armenia • 45-5-0 (30 KOs)

9. FELIX STURM
33 • Germany • 40-5-3 (18 KOs)

10. FEDOR CHUDINOV
74 • Russia • 14-1-0 (10 KOs)

MIDDLEWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 160 LBS

- **C CANELO ALVAREZ**
  46 • Mexico • 48-1-1 (34 KOs)
- **1. GENNADY GOLOVKIN**
  252 • Kaz. • 36-0-0 (33 KOs)
- **2. DANIEL JACOBS**
  95 • U.S. • 32-1-0 (29 KOs)
- **3. BILLY JOE SAUNDERS**
  97 • U.K. • 23-0-0 (12 KOs)
- **4. DAVID LEMIEUX**
  71 • Canada • 35-3-0 (32 KOs)
- **5. ANDY LEE**
  95 • Ireland • 34-3-1 (24 KOs)
- **6. CHRIS EUBANK JR.**
  78 • U.K. • 23-1-0 (18 KOs)
- **7. PETER QUILLIN**
  227 • U.S. • 32-1-1 (23 KOs)
- **8. HASSAN N'DAM**
  142 • Cameroon • 34-2-0 (20 KOs)
- **9. AVTANDIL KHURTSIDZE**
  31 • Georgia • 32-2-2 (21 KOs)
- **10. MACIEJ SULECKI**
  14 • Poland • 23-0-0 (8 KOs)

JR. MIDDLEWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 154 LBS

- **C (VACANT)**
- **1. CANELO ALVAREZ**
  3 • Mexico • 48-1-1 (34 KOs)
- **2. ERISLANDY LARA**
  275 • Cuba • 23-2-2 (13 KOs)
- **3. JERMALL CHARLO**
  121 • U.S. • 24-0-0 (18 KOs)
- **4. MIGUEL COTTO**
  46 • P.R. • 40-5-0 (33 KOs)
- **5. JERMELL CHARLO**
  152 • U.S. • 28-0-0 (13 KOs)
- **6. DEMETRIUS ANDRADE**
  51 • U.S. • 23-0-0 (16 KOs)
- **7. AUSTIN TROUT**
  227 • U.S. • 30-3-0 (17 KOs)
- **8. JULIAN WILLIAMS**
  95 • U.S. • 22-0-1 (14 KOs)
- **9. LIAM SMITH**
  56 • U.K. • 23-1-1 (13 KOs)
- **10. VANES MARTIROSYAN**
  357 • U.S. • 36-3-1 (21 KOs)

WELTERWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 147 LBS

- **C (VACANT)**
- **1. KELL BROOK**
  285 • U.K. • 36-1-0 (25 KOs)
- **2. KEITH THURMAN**
  187 • U.S. • 27-0-0 (22 KOs)
- **3. AMIR KHAN**
  127 • U.K. • 31-4-0 (19 KOs)
- **4. SHAWN PORTER**
  148 • U.S. • 26-2-1 (16 KOs)
- **5. TIM BRADLEY**
  226 • U.S. • 33-2-1 (13 KOs)
- **6. DANNY GARCIA**
  62 • U.S. • 32-0-0 (18 KOs)
- **7. ERROL SPENCE**
  53 • U.S. • 21-0-0 (18 KOs)
- **8. JESSIE VARGAS**
  31 • U.S. • 27-1-0 (10 KOs)
- **9. KONSTANTIN PONOMAREV**
  26 • Ukraine • 30-0-0 (13 KOs)
- **10. FRANKIE GOMEZ**
  22 • U.S. • 21-0-0 (13 KOs)

JR. WELTERWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 140 LBS

- **C TERENCE CRAWFORD**
  77 • U.S. • 29-0-0 (20 KOs)
- **1. VIKTOR POSTOL**
  164 • Ukraine • 28-1-0 (12 KOs)
- **2. LUCAS MATTHYSSE**
  287 • Argentina • 37-4-0 (34 KOs)
- **3. ADRIEN BRONER**
  127 • U.S. • 32-2-0 (24 KOs)
- **4. ANTONIO OROZCO**
  53 • U.S. • 25-0-0 (16 KOs)
- **5. EDUARD TROYANOVSKY**
  45 • Russia • 25-0-0 (22 KOs)
- **6. ADRIAN GRANADOS**
  31 • U.S. • 18-4-2 (12 KOs)
- **7. JACK CATTERALL**
  28 • U.K. • 16-0-0 (9 KOs)
- **8. RICKY BURNS**
  19 • U.K. • 40-5-1 (14 KOs)
- **9. JOHN MOLINA**
  17 • U.S. • 29-6-0 (23 KOs)
- **10. REGIS PROGRAIS**
  11 • U.S. • 18-0-0 (15 KOs)

LIGHTWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 135 LBS

- **C JORGE LINARES**
  135 • Venezuela • 41-3-0 (27 KOs)
- **1. DEJAN ZLATICANIN**
  78 • Montenegro • 22-0-0 (15 KOs)
- **2. TERRY FLANAGAN**
  52 • U.K. • 31-0-0 (12 KOs)
- **3. ROBERT EASTER**
  27 • U.S. • 18-0-0 (14 KOs)
- **4. ANTHONY CROLLA**
  50 • U.K. • 31-5-3 (13 KOs)
- **5. RICHARD COMMEY**
  71 • Ghana • 24-1-0 (22 KOs)
- **6. SHARIF BOGERE**
  101 • Uganda • 29-1-0 (20 KOs)
- **7. DENIS SHAFIKOV**
  78 • Russia • 37-2-1 (20 KOs)
- **8. FELIX VERDEJO**
  25 • Puerto Rico • 22-0-0 (15 KOs)
- **9. PETR PETROV**
  2 • Russia • 38-4-2 (19 KOs)
- **10. MASON MENARD**
  2 • U.S. • 32-1-0 (24 KOs)

JR. LIGHTWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 130 LBS

- **C (VACANT)**
- **1. FRANCISCO VARGAS**
  117 • Mexico • 23-0-2 (17 KOs)
- **2. ORLANDO SALIDO**
  107 • Mexico • 43-13-4 (30 KOs)
- **3. VASYL LOMACHENKO**
  17 • Ukraine • 6-1-0 (4 KOs)
- **4. TAKASHI MIURA**
  183 • Japan • 30-3-2 (23 KOs)
- **5. JEZREEL CORRALES**
  23 • Panama • 20-1-0 (8 KOs)
- **6. TAKASHI UCHIYAMA**
  353 • Japan • 24-1-1 (20 KOs)
- **7. JOSE PEDRAZA**
  90 • P.R. • 22-0-0 (12 KOs)
- **8. ROMAN MARTINEZ**
  422 • P.R. • 29-3-3 (17 KOs)
- **9. SAUL RODRIGUEZ**
  46 • U.S. • 20-0-1 (15 KOs)
- **10. JASON SOSA**
  15 • U.S. • 19-1-4 (15 KOs)

FEATHERWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 126 LBS

- **C (VACANT)**
- **1. GARY RUSSELL JR.**
  80 • U.S. • 27-1-0 (16 KOs)
- **2. CARL FRAMPTON**
  10 • U.K. • 23-0-0 (14 KOs)
- **3. LEE SELBY**
  134 • U.K. • 23-1-0 (8 KOs)
- **4. LEO SANTA CRUZ**
  58 • U.S. • 32-1-1 (18 KOs)
- **5. ABNER MARES**
  179 • Mexico • 29-2-1 (15 KOs)
- **6. SIMPIWE VETYEKA**
  148 • S. Africa • 29-3-0 (17 KOs)
- **7. JESUS CUELLAR**
  104 • Argentina • 28-1-0 (21 KOs)
- **8. OSCAR VALDEZ**
  26 • Mexico • 20-0-0 (18 KOs)
- **9. JOSEPH DIAZ JR.**
  28 • U.S. • 22-0-0 (13 KOs)
- **10. SATOSHI HOSONO**
  42 • Japan • 32-2-1 (21 KOs)

JR. FEATHERWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 122 LBS

- **C (VACANT)**
- **1. GUILLERMO RIGONDEAUX**
  309 • Cuba • 17-0-0 (11 KOs)
- **2. SCOTT QUIGG**
  202 • U.K. • 31-1-2 (23 KOs)
- **3. NONITO DONAIRE**
  80 • Phil. • 37-3-0 (24 KOs)
- **4. GENESIS SERVANIA**
  134 • Phil. • 28-0-0 (11 KOs)
- **5. REY VARGAS**
  95 • Mexico • 28-0-0 (22 KOs)
- **6. JESSIE MAGDALENO**
  69 • U.S. • 23-0-0 (17 KOs)
- **7. HOZUMI HASEGAWA**
  3 • Japan • 36-5-0 (16 KOs)
- **8. JONATHAN GUZMAN**
  11 • Dom. Rep. • 22-0-0 (22 KOs)
- **9. MOISES FLORES**
  13 • Mexico • 25-0-0 (17 KOs)
- **10. DIEGO DE LA HOYA**
  10 • Mexico • 16-0-0 (9 KOs)

HOW OUR RATINGS ARE COMPILED

Championship vacancies can be filled in the following two ways: 1. THE RING'S Nos. 1 and 2 contenders fight one another. 2. If the Nos. 1 and 2 contenders choose not to fight one another and No. 1 fights No. 3, that matchup could be for the RING title if the Editorial Board deems No. 3 worthy.

A champion can lose his belt in six situations: 1. The Champion loses a fight in the weight class in which he is champion; 2. The Champion moves to another weight class; 3. The Champion does not schedule a fight in any weight class for 18 months, although injuries and certain other unforeseen circumstances could be taken into consideration; 4. The Champion does not schedule a fight at his champion weight for 18 months (even if he fights at another weight); 5. The Champion does not schedule a fight with a Top-5 contender from any weight class for two years; 6. The Champion retires.

THE RING Editorial Board considers input from the Ratings Panel of boxing journalists from around the world and then decides collectively what changes will be made. That applies to both the pound-for-pound and divisional ratings.

Records provided by boxrec.com

BANTAMWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 118 LBS

C SHINSUKE YAMANAKA
257 • Japan • 26-0-2 (18 KOs)

1. JAMIE MCDONNELL
179 • U.K. • 28-2-1 (13 KOs)

2. RAU'SHEE WARREN
15 • U.S. • 14-1-0 (4 KOs)

3. JUAN CARLOS PAYANO
106 • Dom. Rep. • 17-1-0 (8 KOs)

4. LEE HASKINS
69 • U.K. • 34-3-0 (14 KOs)

5. ANSELMO MORENO
445 • Panama • 36-5-1 (12 KOs)

6. MARLON TAPALES
42 • Phil. • 29-2-0 (12 KOs)

7. TOMOKI KAMEDA
166 • Japan • 31-2-0 (19 KOs)

8. ZOLANI TETE
30 • S. Africa • 24-3-0 (20 KOs)

9. LUIS NERY
10 • Mexico • 20-0-0 (14 KOs)

10. PUNGLUANG SOR SINGYU
3 • Thailand • 52-4-0 (35 KOs)

JR. BANTAMWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 115 LBS

C (VACANT)

1. NAOYA INOUE
92 • Japan • 11-0-0 (9 KOs)

2. ROMAN GONZALEZ
4 • Nicaragua • 46-0-0 (38 KOs)

3. CARLOS CUADRAS
231 • Mexico • 35-1-1 (27 KOs)

4. SRISAKET SOR RUNGVISAI
179 • Thailand • 41-4-1 (38 KOs)

5. LUIS CONCEPCION
55 • Panama • 35-4-0 (24 KOs)

6. KHALID YAFAI
30 • U.K. • 19-0-0 (13 KOs)

7. KOHEI KONO
51 • Japan • 32-9-1 (13 KOs)

8. JERWIN ANCAJAS
5 • Phil. • 25-1-1 (16 KOs)

9. MCJOE ARROYO
121 • P.R. • 17-1-0 (8 KOs)

10. SHO ISHIDA
17 • Japan • 22-0-0 (11 KOs)

FLYWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 112 LBS

C (VACANT)

1. KAZUTO IOKA
108 • Japan • 20-1-0 (12 KOs)

2. JOHNRIEL CASIMERO
52 • Phil. • 23-3-0 (15 KOs)

3. DONNIE NIETES
2 • Phil. • 39-1-4 (22 KOs)

4. BRIAN VILORIA
274 • U.S. • 36-5-0 (22 KOs)

5. MORUTI MTHALANE
134 • S. Africa • 32-2-0 (21 KOs)

6. AMNAT RUENROENG
126 • Thailand • 17-1-0 (5 KOs)

7. JUAN CARLOS REVECO
262 • Argentina • 36-3-0 (19 KOs)

8. MCWILLIAMS ARROYO
109 • P.R. • 16-3-0 (14 KOs)

9. NAWAPHON POR CHOKCHAI
67 • Thailand • 36-0-0 (28 KOs)

10. DAIGO HIGA
1 • Japan • 10-0-0 (10 KOs)

JR. FLYWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 108 LBS

C (VACANT)

1. RYOICHI TAGUCHI
95 • Japan • 25-2-1 (11 KOs)

2. RANDY PETALCORIN
126 • Phil. • 24-2-1 (18 KOs)

3. PEDRO GUEVARA
184 • Mexico • 28-2-1 (17 KOs)

4. AKIRA YAEGASHI
40 • Japan • 24-5-0 (12 KOs)

5. JAVIER MENDOZA
78 • Mexico • 24-3-1 (19 KOs)

6. MILAN MELINDO
99 • Phil. • 34-2-0 (12 KOs)

7. GANIGAN LOPEZ
31 • Mexico • 28-6-0 (17 KOs)

8. REY LORETO
78 • Phil. • 23-13-0 (15 KOs)

9. MOISES FUENTES
25 • Mexico • 24-2-1 (13 KOs)

10. KEN SHIRO
13 • Japan • 8-0-0 (4 KOs)

STRAWWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 105 LBS

C (VACANT)

1. WANHENG MENAYOTHIN
277 • Thailand • 43-0-0 (17 KOs)

2. KNOCKOUT CP FRESHMART
105 • Thailand • 13-0-0 (6 KOs)

3. BYRON ROJAS
29 • Nicaragua • 18-3-3 (8 KOs)

4. HEKKIE BUDLER
211 • S. Africa • 29-2-0 (9 KOs)

5. JOSE ARGUMEDO
40 • Mexico • 18-3-1 (10 KOs)

6. KATSUNARI TAKAYAMA
184 • Japan • 31-8-0 (12 KOs)

7. CARLOS BUITRAGO
108 • Nicaragua • 29-2-1 (17 KOs)

8. RIKU KANO
19 • Japan • 10-2-1 (5 KOs)

9. JOSE JIMENEZ
19 • Colombia • 17-5-1 (7 KOs)

10. SAUL JUAREZ
13 • Mexico • 23-5-1 (12 KOs)

POUND FOR POUND

1. ROMAN GONZALEZ
122 • Nicaragua • 46-0-0 (38 KOs)

2. SERGEY KOVALEV
82 • Russia • 30-0-1 (26 KOs)

3. GENNADY GOLOVKIN
86 • Kazakhstan • 36-0-0 (33 KOs)

4. ANDRE WARD
56 • U.S. • 30-0-0 (15 KOs)

5. TERENCE CRAWFORD
75 • U.S. • 29-0-0 (20 KOs)

6. GUILLERMO RIGONDEAUX
163 • Cuba • 17-0-0 (11 KOs)

7. VASYL LOMACHENKO
17 • Ukraine • 6-1-0 (4 KO)

8. CANELO ALVAREZ
46 • Mexico • 48-1-1 (34 KOs)

9. SHINSUKE YAMANAKA
73 • Japan • 26-0-2 (18 KOs)

10. CARL FRAMPTON
10 • U.K. • 23-0-0 (14 KOs)

THE RING POLICY ON RATED BOXERS WHO TEST POSITIVE FOR PERFORMANCE-ENHANCING DRUGS

THE RING will remove from its ratings any rated boxer — including a champion — if such boxer at some point undergoes drug testing (Olympic-style or otherwise) and that boxer tests positive for a performance-enhancing drug.

In the event that a boxer has undergone testing in which the boxer provides two samples ("A" and "B") and the boxer's "A" and subsequent "B" samples test positive for a performance-enhancing drug or if his "A" sample tests positive and he waives his right to have the "B" sample tested then the boxer shall immediately be removed from the ratings.

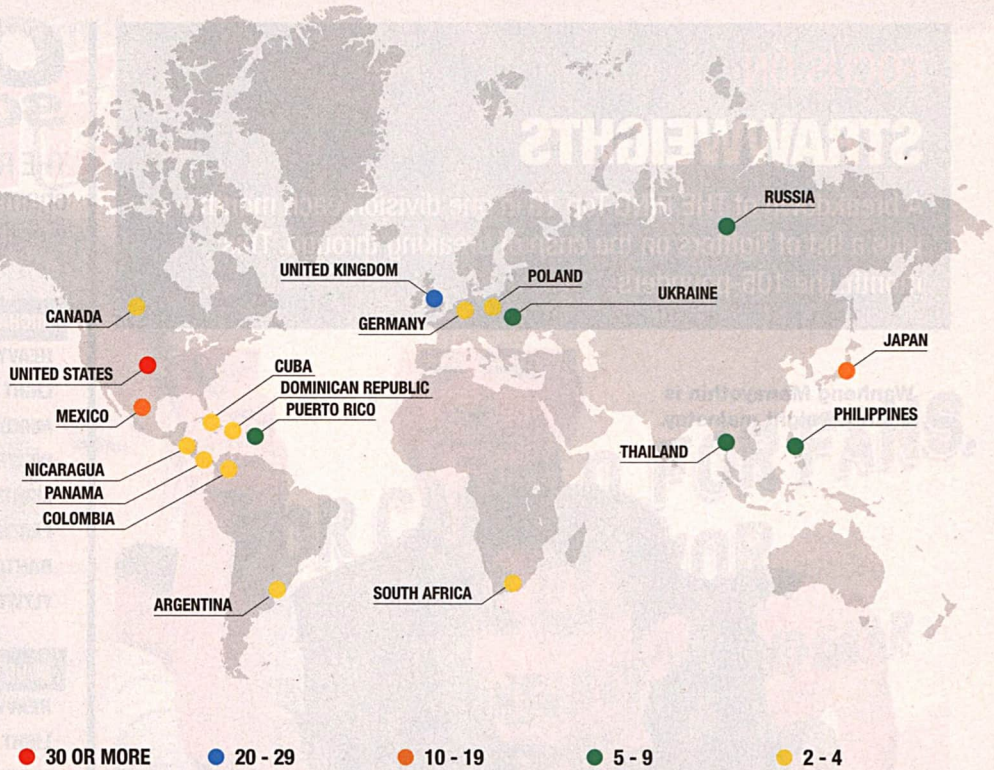
A boxer whose "A" sample tested positive and is awaiting the results of his "B" sample will not be allowed to fight for a championship or rise in the ratings.

A boxer who is removed because of a positive test will have the opportunity to earn his way back into the ratings after any suspension period is completed.

A boxer who is dropped also may be reinstated if the testing agency subsequently reverses its decision or a court of competent jurisdiction finds that the test result was invalid.

RATED FIGHTERS BY COUNTRY

UNITED STATES	37	
UNITED KINGDOM	23	↑ 1
MEXICO	19	↓ 2
JAPAN	16	↑ 1
PHILIPPINES	9	↑ 1
RUSSIA	8	↑ 1
PUERTO RICO	6	
THAILAND	6	↑ 1
UKRAINE	6	
CUBA	4	↓ 1
GERMANY	4	↓ 1
SOUTH AFRICA	4	
ARGENTINA	3	
CANADA	3	
NICARAGUA	3	
PANAMA	3	
COLOMBIA	2	
DOMINICAN REPUBLIC	2	
POLAND	2	
ARMENIA	1	
BULGARIA	1	
CAMEROON	1	
CONGO	1	
GEORGIA	1	
GHANA	1	
IRELAND	1	
KAZAKHSTAN	1	
LATVIA	1	
MALAWI	1	
MONTENEGRO	1	
NEW ZEALAND	1	
SWEDEN	1	
UGANDA	1	
VENEZUELA	1	



Countries out (from last month): *None*
Countries in: *None*

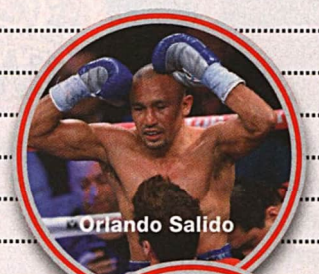
MEXICO VS. JAPAN

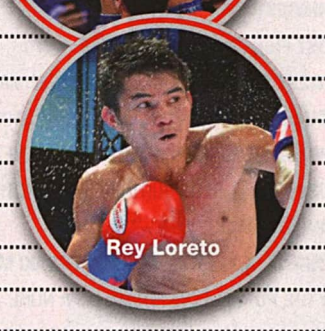
Mexico recently dropped from No. 2 to No. 3, behind the U.K., in the number of fighters rated by THE RING. Could it drop further? No. 4 Japan, with a strong boxing tradition, is three fighters behind Mexico. Here's how those countries compare:

DIVISION	MEXICO	JAPAN
HEAVYWEIGHT	1	0
CRUISERWEIGHT	0	0
LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHT	0	0
SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHT	1	0
MIDDLEWEIGHT	1	0
JUNIOR MIDDLEWEIGHT	1	0
WELTERWEIGHT	0	0
JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHT	0	0
LIGHTWEIGHT	0	0
JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHT	2	2
FEATHERWEIGHT	2	1
JUNIOR FEATHERWEIGHT	3	1
BANTAMWEIGHT	1	2
JUNIOR BANTAMWEIGHT	1	3
FLYWEIGHT	0	2
JUNIOR FLYWEIGHT	4	3
STRAWWEIGHT	2	2
TOTAL	19	16

LOSSES NOT TOLERATED

A quick glance at the RING Ratings reveals that the sport isn't kind to those who lose. Of the 175 fighters in the ratings, 148 (85 percent) have three or fewer losses. Sixty-one (35 percent) have never lost a fight. Two fighters – Orlando Salido and Rey Loreto – buck the trend: They each have 13 losses. Here's how it breaks down (in order of number of losses):





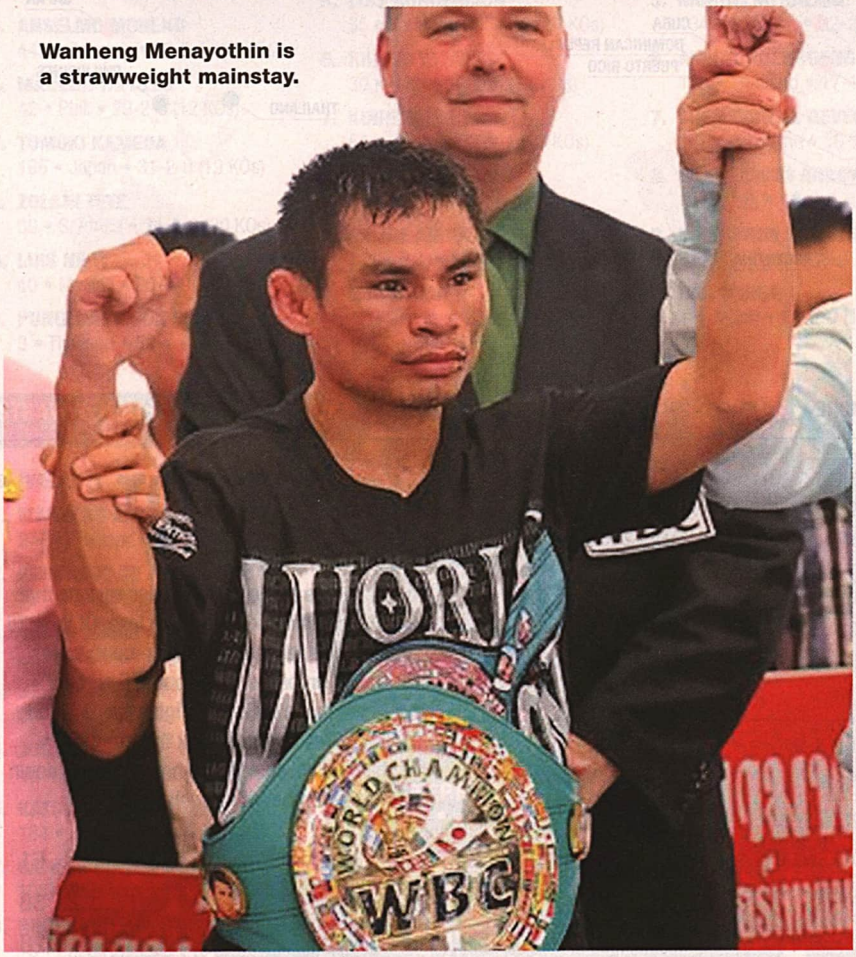
0	61
1	38
2	28
3	21
4	9
5	11
6	2
7	0
8	2
9	1
10	0
11	0
12	0
13	2

Note: *Canelo Alvarez is included twice in these charts because he is rated in two divisions.*

FOCUS ON . . .

STRAWWEIGHTS

A breakdown of THE RING Top 10 in one division each month, plus a list of fighters on the cusp of breaking through. This month: the 105-pounders.



Wanheng Menayothin is a strawweight mainstay.

MOST WEEKS RATED: WANHENG MENAYOTHIN **277**

FEWEST WEEKS RATED: SAUL JUAREZ **13**

OLDEST: JOSE JIMENEZ **33**

YOUNGEST: RIKU KANO **18**

MOST FIGHTS: MENAYOTHIN **43**

FEWEST FIGHTS: KNOCKOUT CP FRESHMART, KANO **13**

HIGHEST WINNING PERCENTAGE: FRESHMART, MENAYOTHIN **100 PERCENT**

LOWEST WINNING PERCENTAGE: JIMENEZ **73.9 PERCENT**

MOST KOS: CARLOS BUITRAGO, MENAYOTHIN **17**

FEWEST KOS: KANO **5**

LONGEST CURRENT WINNING STREAK: MENAYOTHIN **43 FIGHTS**

ON THE POUND-FOR-POUND LIST: NONE

TITLEHOLDERS IN THE TOP 10: JOSE ARGUMEDO **(IBF)**, FRESHMART **(WBA)**, MENAYOTHIN **(WBC)**, KATSUNARI TAKAYAMA **(WBO)**

ON THE CUSP (IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER): SIMPHIWE KHONCO, OMARI KIMWERI, JANIEL RIVERA, ABRAHAM RODRIGUEZ AND RYUYA YAMANAKA

OLD SCHOOL 8

THE RING staff members' current champions in the original eight weight classes.

MICHAEL ROSENTHAL RING MAGAZINE EDITOR

HEAVYWEIGHT: TYSON FURY
LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHT: SERGEY KOVALEV
MIDDLEWEIGHT: GENNADY GOLOVKIN
WELTERWEIGHT: TERENCE CRAWFORD
LIGHTWEIGHT: VASYL LOMACHENKO
FEATHERWEIGHT: GUILLERMO RIGONDEAUX
BANTAMWEIGHT: ROMAN GONZALEZ
FLYWEIGHT: KAZUTO IOKA

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FLYWEIGHT: KAZUTO IOKA

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LIGHTWEIGHT: VASYL LOMACHENKO
FEATHERWEIGHT: CARL FRAMPTON
BANTAMWEIGHT: SHINSUKE YAMANAKA
FLYWEIGHT: DONNIE NIETES

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MIDDLEWEIGHT: GENNADY GOLOVKIN
WELTERWEIGHT: KELL BROOK
LIGHTWEIGHT: VASYL LOMACHENKO
FEATHERWEIGHT: CARL FRAMPTON
BANTAMWEIGHT: SHINSUKE YAMANAKA
FLYWEIGHT: KAZUTO IOKA

Note: *This is how the weights break down: Heavyweight includes cruiserweight, light heavyweight includes super middleweight, all divisions middleweight through flyweight include the "junior" versions, and flyweight also includes strawweight.*

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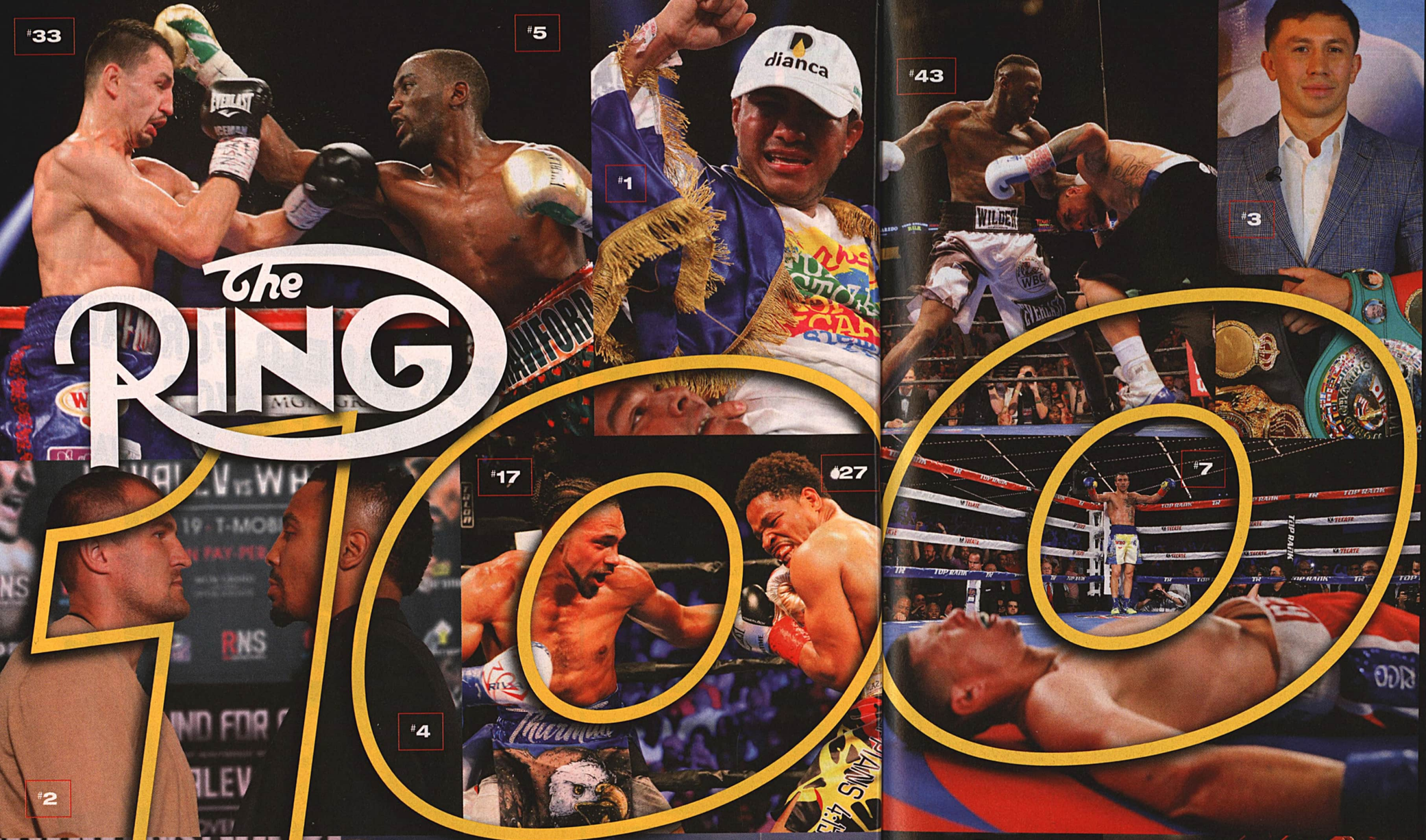


The RING 100

OUR ANNUAL RANKING OF THE BEST FIGHTERS IN THE WORLD

Compiled by **DAVID GREISMAN, MARTIN MULCAHEY AND ANSON WAINWRIGHT**

Written by **DAVID GREISMAN**

Chocolatito is once again Numero Uno.

That's no surprise. Roman Gonzalez was the best boxer in the world at this time last year, the result of his domination in three weight classes and the retirement of the longtime No. 1, Floyd Mayweather Jr. Gonzalez is still undefeated, and now he has added a world title in a fourth weight class with his competitive victory over a very good 115-pounder, Carlos Cuadras.

There's plenty of consistency in this installment of the annual RING 100. Nearly three-quarters of the fighters on last year's list remain. The Top 10 still has seven of the same faces, with their order slightly rejiggered. But plenty else has changed. A lot happens over the course of 12 months, after all, with victories and defeats and other factors leading to boxers rising up or falling down the list – or off, as is the case with 26 names.

Boxing writers David Greisman, Martin Mulcahey and Anson Wainwright – in collaboration with THE RING's editors – once again had the monumental yet enjoyable task of debating, deliberating and then deciding on the RING 100.

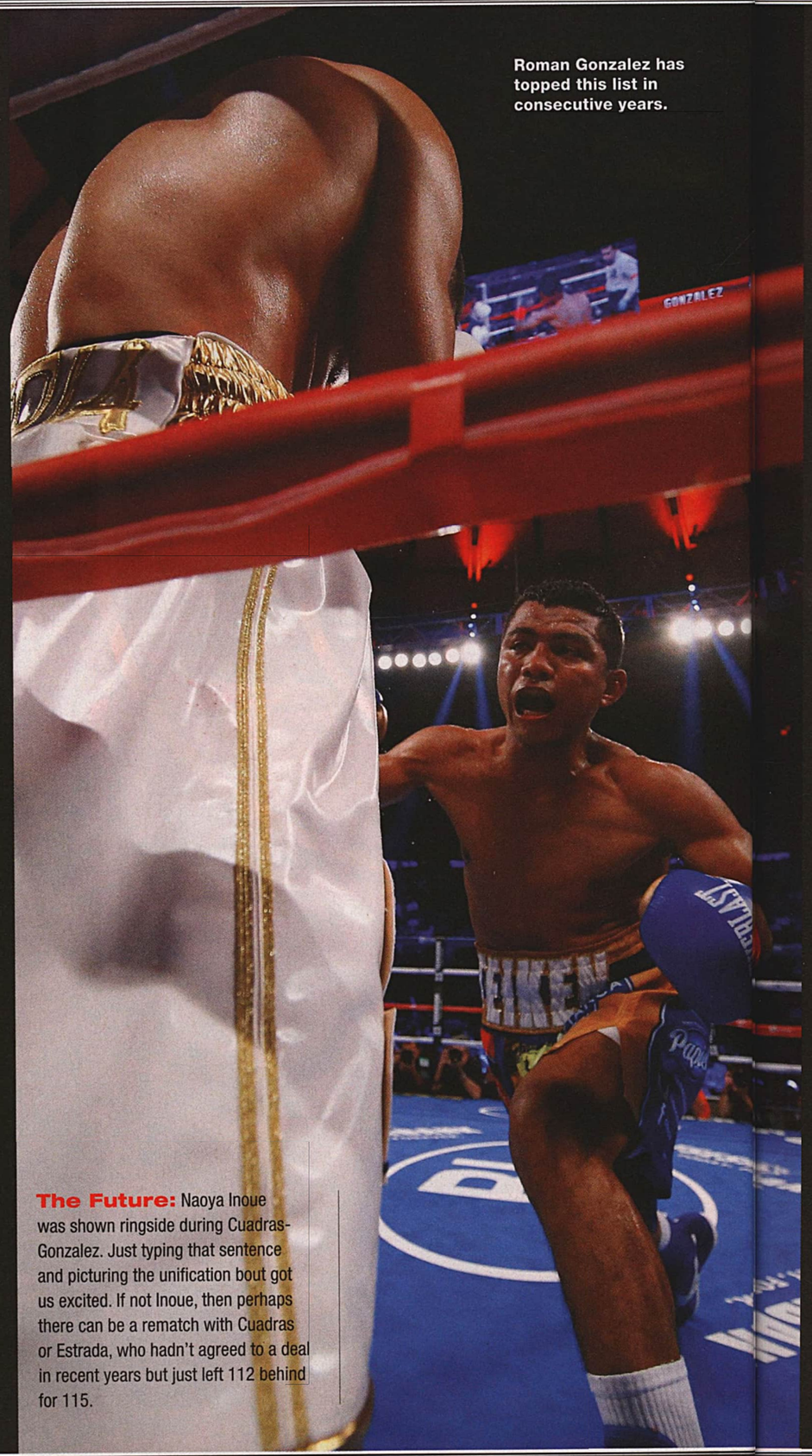
It's a subjective list. Everyone has a different opinion, including each of the writers. It's nonetheless a good snapshot of who the best in the sport are right now, who the best in the sport might be in the future and many of the other titleholders, contenders, prospects and accomplished veterans who aren't just striving to be in the Top 100 but also are aiming to be No. 1. »

Among those who made the RING 100 are (top row, left to right) Viktor Postol, Terence Crawford, Roman Gonzalez, Deontay Wilder and Gennady Golovkin; (middle row) Sergey Kovalev, Andre Ward, Keith Thurman, Shawn Porter and Vasyl Lomachenko; (bottom row) Manny Pacquiao, Jessie Vargas, Errol Spence, Canelo Alvarez and Anthony Joshua.

1. ROMAN GONZALEZ

The Rundown: Junior bantamweight (WBC title) ★ Record: 46-0 (38 KOs) ★ Last year: 1

The Reasons: The upside of Roman Gonzalez being seen by a larger audience is that more people now understand why he's considered the best in the world. The downside is that his opponents are often even less known than he once was, which means it's necessary to explain just what he's accomplishing. In going up to 115 and outpointing Carlos Cuadras, Gonzalez won a world title in a fourth weight class and did so against an opponent who was one of the two best in that division. Cuadras showed his class in defeat, competing on roughly even terms with an offensive dynamo and leaving visible evidence of this on Gonzalez's face. That fight meant Gonzalez is done at 112, where he won the RING championship by defeating Akira Yaegashi in 2014 and successfully defended five times, including a TKO of Brian Viloria and a decision over McWilliams Arroyo. Before that, he took out former 105-pound titleholder Francisco Rodriguez Jr. Gonzalez also was a titleholder at 105 (wins there included Yutaka Niida and Katsunari Takayama) and then at 108 (where he capped his run with a decision over Juan Francisco Estrada, who went on to win two flyweight titles). Gonzalez is a marvel. It's not just the sheer amount of punches; it's the speed with which he throws them and how he places them. That helped propel him past a naturally larger opponent in Cuadras, which helped keep him atop this list for the second year in a row.



Roman Gonzalez has topped this list in consecutive years.

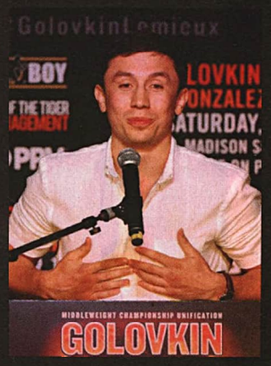
The Future: Naoya Inoue was shown ringside during Cuadras-Gonzalez. Just typing that sentence and picturing the unification bout got us excited. If not Inoue, then perhaps there can be a rematch with Cuadras or Estrada, who hadn't agreed to a deal in recent years but just left 112 behind for 115.

2. SERGEY KOVALEV

The Rundown: Light heavyweight (IBF, WBA and WBO titles) ★ Record: 30-0-1 (26 KOs) ★ Last year: 3 ▲

The Reasons: The 175-pound division hasn't been very deep beyond its top two, but what Kovalev has done in recent years far surpasses the resume of his rival, Adonis Stevenson. And it can get even better for Kovalev if he beats Andre Ward this November. That would give him a win over the undefeated former super middleweight titleholder and one of the best boxers pound-for-pound. Kovalev also belongs on that list now thanks to his title win over Nathan Cleverly in 2013 and eight defenses since, six by knockout. The most notable was his shutout of Bernard Hopkins to unify three belts. His first stoppage of Jean Pascal was more meaningful than his second. There were a few overmatched no-hopers along the way as well. Most recently, Kovalev had a little trouble with contender Isaac Chilemba but emerged with the clear decision.

The Future: Kovalev vs. Ward will be Nov. 19 in Las Vegas.



3. GENNADY GOLOVKIN

The Rundown: Middleweight (IBF, WBA, WBC titles) ★ Record: 36-0 (33 KOs) ★ Last year: 4 ▲

The Reasons: The best 160-pounders Golovkin has faced since his 2012 HBO debut are Matthew Macklin, Daniel Geale, Martin Murray and David Lemieux. Incredibly, another year went by with too many name middleweights finding reasons not to fight "GGG." Golovkin scored a quick KO of Dominic Wade in early 2016 after mandatory challenger Tureano Johnson pulled out with an injury, the only valid reason to not get in the ring with Golovkin. Titleholder Billy Joe Saunders turned him down. Canelo Alvarez called out Golovkin and soon decided to ditch his title instead, saying he wouldn't meet Golovkin until late in 2017, at the earliest. That belt became one of three Golovkin now has. Chris Eubank Jr. didn't accept an offer but welterweight titleholder Kell Brook did instead in September. Golovkin took Brook's brave challenge, and some flush shots, but broke Brook's orbital bone and got a fifth-round TKO.

The Future: Maybe 2017 will be different. As of presstime, Golovkin was negotiating to fight Daniel Jacobs next.

4. ANDRE WARD

The Rundown: Light heavyweight ★ Record: 30-0 (15 KOs) ★ Last year: 2 ▼

The Reasons: For the first time in half a decade, Andre Ward has fought more than once in a calendar year. By the end of 2016, he will have been in the ring three times, with the final fight being his biggest one of the year and perhaps in his career. For while Ward became the top super middleweight after his 2009 decision over Mikkel Kessler and RING champion with his 2011 win over Carl Froch in the Super Six finale, this November will bring a bout against Sergey Kovalev for three light heavyweight titles and a place at either No. 1 or No. 2 on this list. Ward, a highly skilled boxer, has an excellent chance but will face a tough foe. This is the kind of legacy-building he should've sought after Froch. Instead of an active, dominating reign, Ward had just three fights in four years because of injuries and promotional squabbles.

The Future: Ward faces Kovalev on Nov. 19.

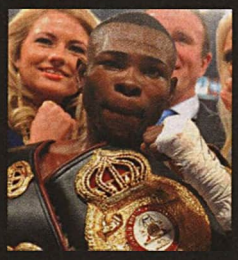
5. TERENCE CRAWFORD

The Rundown: Junior welterweight (RING, WBC and WBO titles) ★ Record: 29-0 (20 KOs) ★ Last year: 7 ▲

The Reasons: Crawford looked great for three years in two divisions against a slate of opponents who were mostly second-tier or lower. But he looked just as gifted and brilliant against the other top 140-pounder in the world, Viktor Postol, leaving unscathed with a wide unanimous decision. Crawford made Postol come forward and used foot speed to make him reset, laying traps and walking him into shots, including the punches that knocked Postol down twice. It wasn't the most entertaining fight, but it was impressive. Crawford had two titles and two successful defenses at lightweight. In the span of 15 months at junior welterweight, he put three more belts around his waist and beat Thomas Dulorme, Dierry Jean, Hank Lundy and Postol. There isn't much else of note available at 140 – and Manny Pacquiao's team doesn't favor the style matchup – so perhaps a move to 147 will come soon.

The Future: Crawford won't be back until 2017.

6.



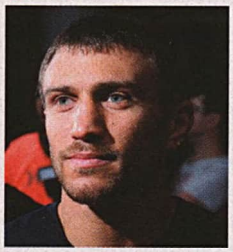
GUILLERMO RIGONDEAUX

The Rundown: Junior featherweight (WBA title) ★ Record: 17-0 (11 KOs) ★ Last year: 5 ▼

The Reasons: Rigondeaux continues to lose without being beaten. Last year he was RING champ and had two world titles. Then he was stripped of everything before getting one belt back. One of the most skilled boxers can't (or won't) do enough to convince the biggest names to face him or the networks to feature him. Rigondeaux's only fight in 2015 came under Miguel Cotto-Canelo Alvarez, and only because Andre Ward fell off the card and Rigondeaux signed with Ward and Cotto's promoter. A decision over Drian Francisco didn't thrill anyone. Nor did a two-round TKO of Jazza Dickens this past July in the U.K., with the only shot of note being the one that broke Dickens' jaw and made him stay in his corner. Rigondeaux is willing to travel, but he has damaged his cause by earning a reputation as a tough out who doesn't entertain or draw fans. He's extremely high risk and extremely low reward. He's undefeated and great, but he isn't moving up on this list just yet.

The Future: Rigondeaux owes a fight to mandatory challenger Moises Flores.

7.



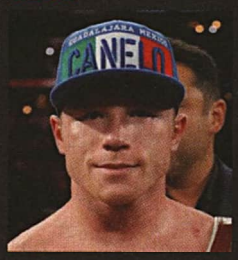
VASYL LOMACHENKO

The Rundown: Junior lightweight (WBO title) ★ Record: 6-1 (4 KOs) ★ Last year: 20 ▲

The Reasons: In contrast with Rigondeaux, Lomachenko has the backing of a major promoter and HBO and has been willing to take risks. He challenged Orlando Salido in just his second pro fight — his eighth if you include his time with the World Series of Boxing — and came up just short against a heavy and heavily fouling opponent. Lomachenko beat Gary Russell Jr. for a vacant world title in his next bout and then spent the rest of 2014 and all of 2015 in three mismatches against unheralded opposition. So with no other big names available at 126, Lomachenko went up to 130 and impressed with how he took out Roman Martinez in five rounds this June. He, like Rigondeaux, is so much better than so many, but he doesn't feel the need to coast by on the minimum, which is to his benefit and ours.

The Future: Lomachenko was set to make his first defense at 130 against Nicholas Walters on Nov. 26 in Las Vegas.

8.



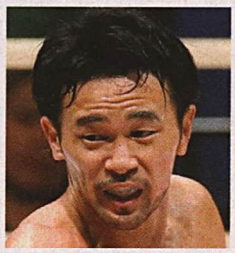
CANELO ALVAREZ

The Rundown: Junior middleweight (WBO title)/ middleweight (RING title). Record: 48-1-1 (34 KOs). Last year: 11 ▲

The Reasons: For as much criticism as Alvarez receives, he is clearly a very good boxer. It wasn't just his size that led him to a unanimous decision over Miguel Cotto and knockouts of Amir Khan and Liam Smith, even if his heavier weight gave him an advantage. Look back again at the feint that led to the Khan KO. Watch how he went to the ropes to set Smith up for counters and combinations. He is both savvy and skilled. That and his RING championship at 160 are why fans wait for him to take on Gennady Golovkin, who would represent his toughest challenge since suffering his lone loss to Floyd Mayweather Jr. in 2013. Alvarez hasn't shied away from other difficult opponents, including Austin Trout and Erislandy Lara. The victory over Smith was against the least threatening of the 154-pound titleholders. Now he heads toward the most dangerous middleweight in the world.

The Future: Alvarez injured his hand against Smith. He'll be back in 2017.

9.



SHINSUKE YAMANAKA

The Rundown: Bantamweight (RING and WBC titles) ★ Record: 26-0-2 (18 KOs) ★ Last year: 9

The Reasons: Yamanaka is the longest-reigning titleholder in boxing today, capturing a vacant bantamweight belt back in late 2011 and holding it for five years now. (Gennady Golovkin's WBA title wasn't recognized by RING until late 2012.) Over those years, he is 11-0 (7 KOs) in his defenses. But one of those, a 2015 fight with former titleholder Anselmo Moreno, almost ended badly for him. Moreno boxed well and made Yamanaka miss more than he was accustomed to, but the judges still made Yamanaka the controversial winner. Yamanaka erased any doubt we had about him in their September rematch, putting Moreno down four times (and coming off the canvas once himself) for a dominating and enjoyable seventh-round technical knockout. Add in victories over Vic Darchinyan, Tomas Rojas, Liborio Solis, Suriyan Sor Rungvisai and Malcolm Tunacao and he is now 7-0 against fighters who once held world titles.

The Future: Yamanaka wants the other fighters at 118 who currently hold titles. He may be back as soon as January and then will aim for them.

10.

CARL FRAMPTON

The Rundown: Featherweight (WBA title) ★ Record: 23-0 (14 KOs) ★ Last year: 26 ▲

The Reasons: This has been Frampton's best year yet. 2016 saw him wrap up a reign at 122 by winning a big unification bout against Scott Quigg and then jumping up to 126 to capture another world title with a great performance in a competitive fight with Leo Santa Cruz. Frampton was already a rising star in the U.K. and Ireland when he took a belt from Kiko Martinez in 2014. Three successful defenses came afterward, though he had to come off the canvas twice to beat Alejandro Gonzalez Jr. in 2015, while the Quigg fight was mostly tactical and failed to produce the desired fireworks until the later rounds. Frampton and Santa Cruz entertained for all 12, though, with Frampton mixing smart boxing and thrilling exchanges to take the title by majority decision. He feels replenished at featherweight, and that showed this past July.

The Future: Frampton's first defense wasn't set, although Santa Cruz will likely get a rematch.

11.

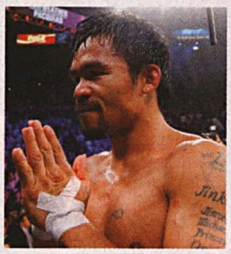
NAOYA INOUE

The Rundown: Junior bantamweight (WBO title) ★ Record: 11-0 (9 KOs) ★ Last year: 15 ▲

The Reasons: Those watching Inoue's victory over David Carmona earlier in 2016 were worried that he might have hurt his hand again. It wasn't serious, as Inoue was back four months later and is active at a time when his division is truly heating up. Inoue is just 23, a prodigy who was 5-0 when he stopped Adrian Hernandez for a world title at 108 pounds in 2014 and was just 7-0 when he jumped all the way up to 115 later that year to knock out longtime titleholder Omar Narvaez in two rounds. Inoue's right hand was damaged in that victory, which sidelined him for nearly a full year. He returned in late 2015 to make quick work of Warlito Parrenas, outpointed Carmona in May and broke down Petchbarngborn Kokietgym in September. At 11-0, more than half his wins have been in world title fights.

The Future: Inoue could be back in late December, though nothing was official. If he wins, bigger fights loom for 2017.

12.



MANNY PACQUIAO

The Rundown: Welterweight ★ Record: 58-6-2 (38 KOs) ★ Last year: 8 ▼

The Reasons: When Pacquiao exited the MGM Grand Garden Arena so that he could focus on the political arena, it was hard to believe that he was done with boxing for good. It took less than four months to confirm that he's not. Pacquiao, who went from beating Timothy Bradley in their third fight to winning a senate seat in the Philippines, will come back this fall to challenge welterweight titleholder Jessie Vargas. While not a marquee matchup against a big name or a top talent – no Terence Crawford, for example – Vargas is still a respectable opponent. Pacquiao won lineal championships at 112, 126, 130 and 140 and held world titles at 122, 135, 147 and 154. He wasn't great enough to beat Mayweather, but he's still very good. The Bradley victory was a convincing one. Every fight from here on out will show whether one of the best of this era can remain one of the best 147- or 140-pounders of today.

The Future: Vargas-Pacquiao was set for Nov. 5.

13.

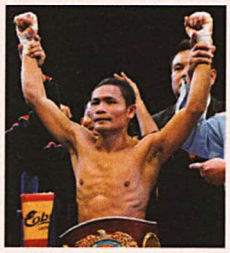
KELL BROOK

The Rundown: Welterweight (IBF title) ★ Record: 36-1 (25 KOs) ★ Last year: 10 ▼

The Reasons: Brook gambled dangerously and didn't win, but it should still pay out beyond the check he got for losing to Gennady Golovkin. He needs that after a mix of success and setbacks. As an undefeated prospect, he struggled to a decision over Carson Jones in 2012 but looked much better while stopping Jones a year later. Brook arrived when he took a title from Shawn Porter in 2014 and then was seriously wounded in a machete attack weeks later. Next came defenses against foes who clearly weren't as talented as Brook: Jo Jo Dan, Frankie Gavin and Kevin Bizier, all while Brook waited and lobbied for other names, including domestic rival Amir Khan, to face him. Finally, this year was going to bring a unification bout with Jessie Vargas. Then the Golovkin fight presented itself – a chance to be seen as a star, win or lose. Brook was stopped in five but may become an even bigger attraction in the U.K.

The Future: Brook may move to 154 after his facial fracture heals.

14.



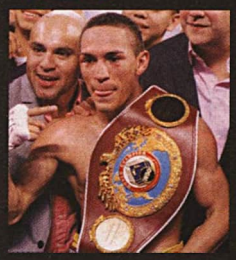
DONNIE NIETES

The Rundown: Flyweight ★ Record: Record: 39-1-4 (22 KOs) ★ Last year: 22 ▲

The Reasons: It's a rare moment when Nietes doesn't have a world title belt around his waist. He reigned at 105 from 2007 into 2011, when he vacated his title to move up to junior flyweight. He won a belt at 108 later that year, became RING champion in the division in 2014 and held both titles until the second half of 2016, when he announced a move up to flyweight. Nietes is a combined 12-0-1 in his defenses. The draw came in 2013 against Moises Fuentes, whom Nietes knocked out in their rematch the following year. Fuentes was due a third fight, but Nietes was ready to move on to bigger things, literally and figuratively. Two of his final three wins at 108 came against a pair of former 105-pound titleholders in Francisco Rodriguez Jr. and Raul Garcia. His move to 112 brought a shutout of former 108-pound titleholder Edgar Sosa in September.

The Future: Don't be surprised if Nietes fights for one of Juan Francisco Estrada's vacated belts next.

15.



JUAN FRANCISCO ESTRADA

The Rundown: Junior bantamweight ★ Record: 33-2 (24 KOs) ★ Last year: 16 ▲

The Reasons: Estrada's name is linked with No. 1 on our list — dating back to his competitive loss to Roman Gonzalez back in 2012 — but he hasn't ridden Chocolatito's coattails. Immediately after that defeat, Estrada went from 108 to 112 and won two world titles with a split decision over Brian Viloria. There were five successful defenses during his reign, with a decision over Milan Melindo and then stoppages of Richie Mepranum, Rommel Asenjo and former titleholders Giovani Segura and Hernan Marquez. A hand injury suffered against Marquez sidelined Estrada for some time. There also was no deal made for a Gonzalez rematch. Two major fights lingered at flyweight: a mandatory against a resurgent Kazuto Ioka and a clash with rising 108-pound champ Donnie Nietes. Estrada chose neither, ditching his belts and moving up to 115.

The Future: Estrada is aiming for Luis Concepcion, Carlos Cuadras, Gonzalez and Naoya Inoue.

16.

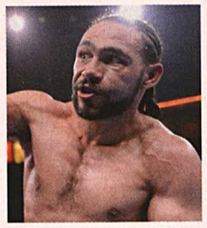
DANNY GARCIA

The Rundown: Welterweight (WBC title) ★ Record: 32-0 (18 KOs) ★ Last year: 19 ▲

The Reasons: Garcia was a unified champion at junior welterweight whose biggest wins were a TKO of Amir Khan and a close decision over Lucas Matthysse. Now he has added a title at 147 but needs to get more significant wins under his belt. Garcia's gradual transition to welterweight included a fortunate decision over Lamont Peterson at 143 in 2015. Then Garcia moved the rest of the way up, stopping Paulie Malignaggi last year before outpointing a better-than-expected Robert Guerrero this past January for one of the titles left vacant after Floyd Mayweather Jr. retired. Garcia's good but inconsistent. He boxed wisely against Matthysse but looked lost against Peterson and had trouble with Mauricio Herrera. And we haven't seen the power he displayed at 140 in his new division. Garcia did have some nice moments in the Guerrero victory.

The Future: Garcia was expected to tune up on Nov. 12 for a 2017 fight with Keith Thurman.

17.

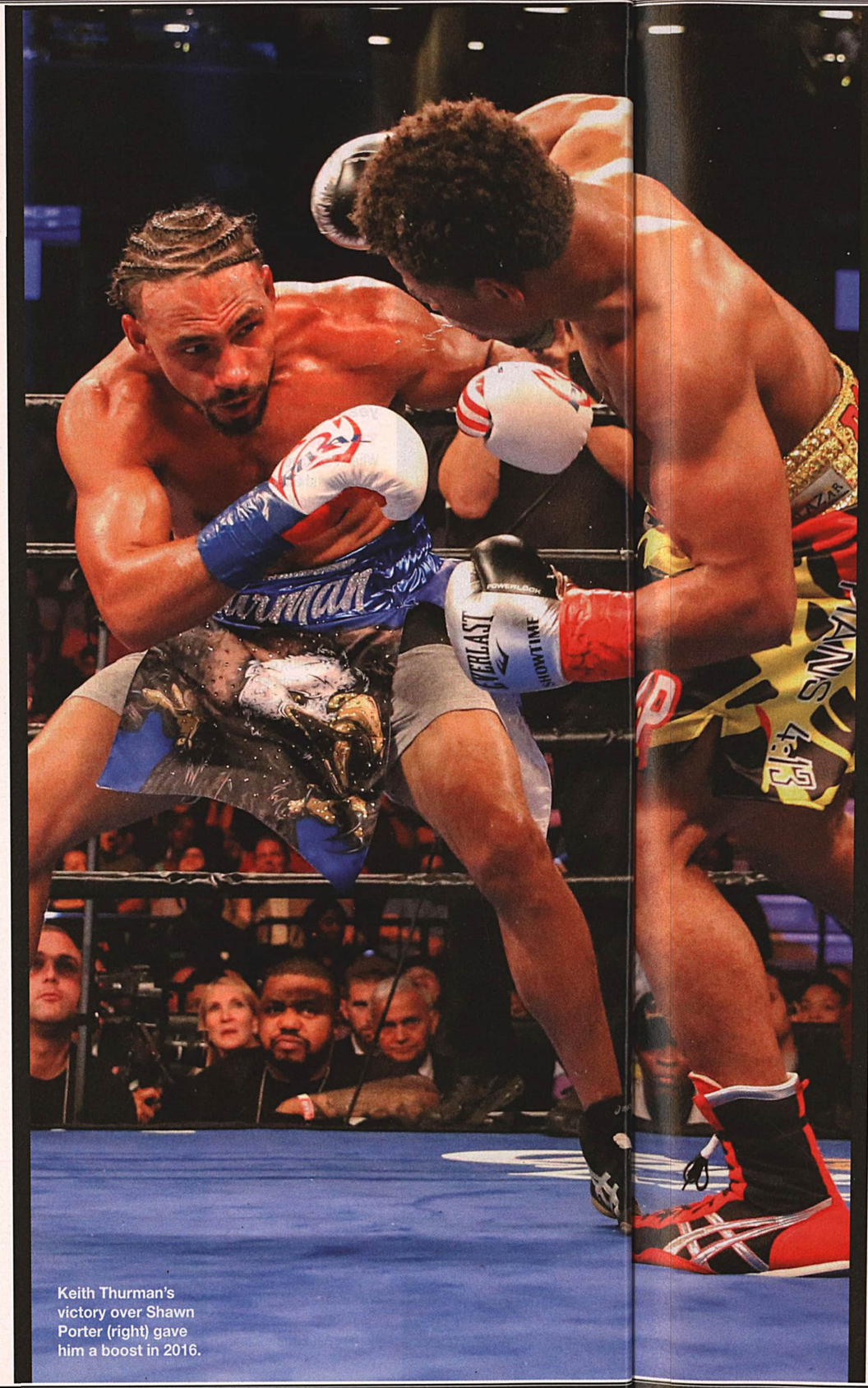


KEITH THURMAN

The Rundown: Welterweight (WBA title) ★ Record: 27-0 (22 KOs) ★ Last year: 27 ▲

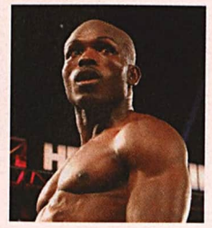
The Reasons: Thurman was nicknamed "One Time" because he supposedly only needed to hit you once for a fight to be over. The power isn't as fight-changing now that he's fighting better opposition, but Thurman's heavy hands aren't the only reason he's gotten as far as he has. He's willing to trade, as we saw in victories over Jesus Soto Karass in 2013 and Robert Guerrero in 2015. He's also capable of using movement and counterpunching, both of which helped him take a close unanimous decision over former titleholder Shawn Porter this past June. The Porter victory proved that Thurman belongs toward the top at 147 after years of his doubters waiting for him to be beaten. That moment may still come, but it will take someone very good to give "One Time" his one and only loss.

The Future: Thurman was recovering from a cut and didn't have his next fight set. A bout with Danny Garcia in 2017 is possible.



Keith Thurman's victory over Shawn Porter (right) gave him a boost in 2016.

18.



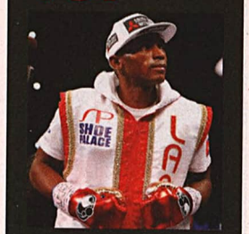
TIMOTHY BRADLEY

The Rundown: Welterweight ★ Record: 33-2-1 (13 KOs) ★ Last year: 12. ▼

The Reasons: Bradley's rivalry with Manny Pacquiao was settled after their third fight in April, with Pacquiao going 2-1. Even if you don't give Bradley credit for his highly controversial decision win in their first meeting, his only losses came to one of the best in the world, and his resume remains impressive. He held world titles at 140 from 2008 to 2011, a reign that included victories over Devon Alexander and Lamont Peterson. Bradley won a brutal fight against Ruslan Provodnikov in 2013 that was closer and tougher than he should've allowed it to be and then boxed well en route to a close split decision over Juan Manuel Marquez later that year. Bradley also outpointed Jessie Vargas in 2015, surviving shaky last seconds for an otherwise clear victory. He gave up his title at 147 – his second time holding it – so as to face Pacquiao. With that trilogy done, Bradley should seek to prove himself against today's top welterweights.

The Future: Nothing was set. Bradley was helping coach high school football in the meantime.

19.



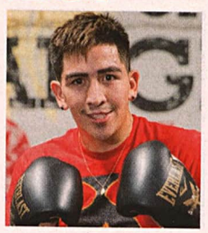
ERISLANDY LARA

The Rundown: Junior middleweight (WBA title) ★ Record: 23-2-2 (13 KOs) ★ Last year: 23 ▲

The Reasons: Even though Lara, like many of the other top 154-pounders, is with powerful adviser Al Haymon, we don't often hear those other junior middleweights calling him out. That's because Lara is good and because he's good at making his opponents look bad, at the expense of them, the viewers and ultimately himself. Lara is still in a decent position despite a few disappointments: a robbery loss to Paul Williams in 2011, a technical draw with Vanes Martirosyan in a 2012 elimination bout and a debated loss to Canelo Alvarez in 2014 in which he moved too much and threw too little. That's because he has some notable victories, including a battle with Alfredo Angulo and a wide decision over Austin Trout in 2013, plus a rematch victory over Martirosyan this past May. He has a world title. The problem is that no one of note wants to vie for that belt if it means facing him.

The Future: Lara's next defense hadn't been scheduled.

20.



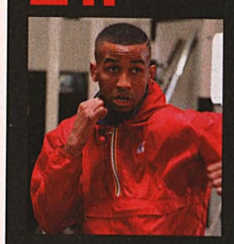
LEO SANTA CRUZ

The Rundown: Featherweight ★ Record: 32-1-1 (18 KOs) ★ Last year: 24 ▲

The Reasons: With so many titles available, winning one in three divisions isn't as meaningful as it once was. So as impressive as Leo Santa Cruz was while picking up titles at 118, 122 and 126, the greats aren't measured by what they won so much as who they won against. He did perform well while outworking and outpointing Abner Mares in 2015. After a fun but suspenseless defense against Kiko Martinez, Santa Cruz took on a tough challenge in rising 122-pound titleholder Carl Frampton. Their entertaining battle was competitive, but it was Frampton whose strategy and technique earned the victory. Santa Cruz held his own against a fantastic fighter. Now he'll need to demonstrate whether he has what it takes to adjust and do better. That's the difference between belonging in the ring with the greats and simply being listed among them.

The Future: Santa Cruz wants a Frampton rematch, but nothing had been made official.

21.



RANCES BARTHELEMY

The Rundown: Junior welterweight ★ Record: 25-0 (13 KOs) ★ Last year: 35 ▲

The Reasons: Barthelemy's two title reigns each lasted less than a year. That's not because he's been beaten. He just hasn't been able to stick around long enough to make more than one defense at either junior lightweight or lightweight and establish himself as the dominant presence. He outgrew those divisions, but perhaps now at 140 he'll be able to remain and show his full potential. Barthelemy's time with a title at 130 would've been slightly longer had he knocked out Argenis Mendez before the bell to end the second round rather than after it. Instead, Barthelemy took their 2014 rematch and the belt by decision, shut out Fernando Saucedo months later and moved up. After two junior welterweight bouts, Barthelemy cut to 135, outpointed Denis Shafikov for a vacant title in late 2015 and then defeated Mickey Bey by decision this past June before vacating once again.

The Future: Barthelemy's next fight hadn't been scheduled.

22.

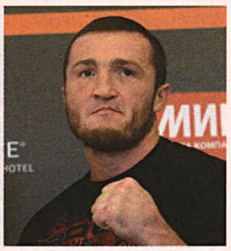
KAZUTO **IOKA**

The Rundown: Flyweight (WBA title) ★ Record: 20-1 (12 KOs) ★ Last year: 31 ▲

The Reasons: Ioka has won six straight since dropping his debut in the 112-pound division back in 2014, a split decision to the always awkward Amnat Ruenroeng. His victories included a narrow one over contender Juan Carlos Reveco last year and an 11th-round stoppage in their rematch to wrap up 2015. Ioka similarly beat the fight out of Keyvin Lara this past July, finishing that one as well in the 11th round. Now he has a third world title. He was the WBA's "regular" titleholder, which THE RING didn't recognize until "super" titleholder Juan Francisco Estrada ditched his belts.
Ioka was previously a precocious titleholder at strawweight and junior flyweight. He was 6-0 when he won a belt at 105, unifying titles in his third defense, a thriller against Akira Yaegashi. He was 10-0 when he moved up to 108 and won a title there. He successfully defended that belt three times.

The Future: Ioka needed a foe in lieu of Estrada and found one for Dec. 31 in unbeaten Stamp Kiatniwat.

23.



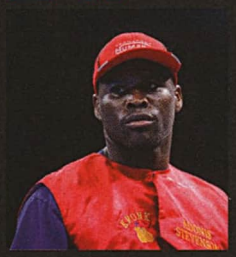
DENIS **LEBEDEV**

The Rundown: Cruiserweight (IBF and WBA titles) ★ Record: 29-2 (22 KOs) ★ Last year: 38 ▲

The Reasons: Lebedev is now 37 and capping his career with his best stretch. In his past four fights he has given the first pro loss to prospect Pawel Kolodziej, come off the canvas to defeat contender Youri Kalenga, bounced Lateef Kayode off the mat several times for a win and then made quick work of Victor Emilio Ramirez to unify titles. He has clearly rebounded from the beating he took in defeat against Guillermo Jones in 2013, a loss that still hasn't been officially overturned despite Jones' positive test for a banned substance (although Lebedev was rightly given his title back). The only other loss on his record came via split decision to Marco Huck in 2010. Lebedev had bounced back from the Huck defeat by beating up old versions of Roy Jones Jr. and James Toney. While that may have padded his bank account, this stretch is building Lebedev's legacy.

The Future: Lebedev is slated to face young and undefeated countryman Murat Gassiev on Dec. 3.

24.



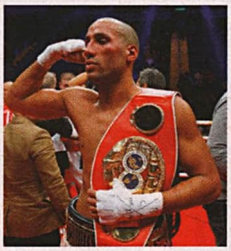
ADONIS **STEVENSON**

The Rundown: Light heavyweight (WBC title) ★ Record: 28-1 (23 KOs) ★ Last year: 21 ▼

The Reasons: There's still no fight with Sergey Kovalev in sight. And Stevenson hasn't done enough to distinguish himself in lieu of facing the Russian. His opposition was so weak that THE RING stripped him of its title. He remains the lineal champ. Stevenson had a great 2013, avenging his sole defeat to powerful journeyman Darnell Boone, dethroning champ Chad Dawson in 76 seconds and taking out Tavoris Cloud and Tony Bellew in defenses. A fight with Andrzej Fonfara in 2014 turned surprisingly competitive and then Stevenson's choices of opponents weren't: Dmitry Sukhotsky, Sakio Bika and Tommy Karpency. After a 10-month layoff, Stevenson returned this July with something better. Thomas Williams Jr. hadn't proven himself at 175, but Williams made Stevenson prove what he had left. "Superman" stopped Williams in four. He's now 39. Time might be running out, which is why it's a shame that Stevenson squandered so much of his reign.

The Future: Stevenson's eighth defense hadn't been announced. Eleider Alvarez is his mandatory challenger.

25.



JAMES **DEGALE**

The Rundown: Super middleweight (IBF title) ★ Record: 23-1 (14 KOs) ★ Last year: 37 ▲

The Reasons: DeGale was golden in the 2008 Olympics and then entered the pros with great expectations for his future. He's now in the process of fulfilling them, though his road there wasn't without a bump. When DeGale was 10-0 in 2011, he took on future contender George Groves and lost a razor-thin majority decision. It was Groves who would later go on to challenge Carl Froch twice. DeGale put together a win streak that placed him in position to face Froch, who decided to retire. DeGale instead fought for the only vacant world title, outpointing Andre Dirrell in 2015. He took a victory over a resurgent Lucian Bute in his first defense and then weathered a gritty fight from Rogelio Medina this past April for another victory.

The Future: DeGale-Medina came on the same card as Badou Jack's draw with Lucian Bute, which was meant to set up a unification between DeGale and Jack that had not yet been made official.

26.

JORGE **LINARES**

The Rundown: Lightweight (RING and WBA titles) ★ Record: 41-3 (27 KOs) ★ Last year: 47 ▲

The Reasons: Linares has now won as many title fights at 135 as he did during stints at 126 and 130. He was once lavished with praise by connoisseurs — the "Golden Boy" nickname carries high expectations — only to fall short more than once. His time at junior lightweight ended in 2009 against Juan Carlos Salgado, done in 73 seconds. He fell apart late against Antonio DeMarco in 2011 and was stopped in two by Sergio Thompson in 2012 as a result of a bad cut. But in 2014, Linares won a vacant lightweight belt and then defended it by coming from behind to halt Kevin Mitchell in 2015. After an easy fight against Ivan Cano, Linares suffered a broken hand ahead of a bout with mandatory Dejan Zlaticanin and had to drop his title. Instead of facing Zlaticanin upon his return, Linares met Anthony Crolla in September, using good combinations and body work en route to a decision victory.

The Future: A Crolla rematch could take place in early 2017.

27.

SHAWN **PORTER**

The Rundown: Welterweight ★ Record: 26-2-1 (16 KOs) ★ Last year: 29 ▲

The Reasons: Porter gave Keith Thurman a good, close fight in June, only to come up one round short on the scorecards. That makes two losses against two very good fighters; the other defeat came against Kell Brook in 2014. Porter had been a titleholder before Brook, taking a belt from Devon Alexander in 2013 and obliterating Paulie Malignaggi in his first defense. Porter hasn't backed down from tough challenges. He sought a rematch with Julio Diaz nine months after the difficult time he had in their 2012 draw. He faced Brook; no one else of note at welterweight has done the same. He agreed to a 144-pound catchweight against Adrien Broner and left with the victory. And he waited a full year for the chance to settle a rivalry with Thurman. While Porter has come up short against two of the top 147-pounders of today, he remains a true contender who deserves another chance.

The Future: Porter wants a rematch with Thurman but is waiting to find out who he will face next.

28.

CARLOS **CUADRAS**

The Rundown: Junior bantamweight ★ Record: 35-1-1 (27 KOs) ★ Last year: 60 ▲

The Reasons: It's hard for a fighter to find a silver lining in losing, especially if it's his first defeat. That's OK. We'll do it for Cuadras, who dropped his title to Roman Gonzalez by unanimous decision in September. If you're going to have a blemish on your record, have it come from the best boxer in the world today. Have it come in a competitive fight in which you put up plenty of resistance against an often-overwhelming presence. Have the fight end with your opponent's face marked up in a way that hasn't been seen before. Yes, Cuadras lost to Gonzalez, but his performance only bolsters the argument that he belongs near the top of his division. Cuadras took that belt from Srisaket Sor Rungvisai in 2014 and defended it with five wins and a technical draw, including a victory over Luis Concepcion, who went on to win a belt of his own in 2016.

The Future: Cuadras' performance will land him either an immediate rematch with Gonzalez or an eliminator for the right to face him again.

29.

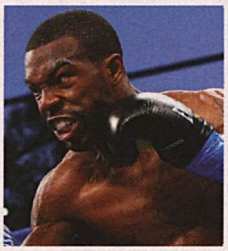
DANIEL **JACOBS**

The Rundown: Middleweight ★ Record: 32-1 (29 KOs) ★ Last year: unranked ▲

The Reasons: Jacobs was "The Golden Child" in 2010, when he first fought for a world title and suffered a surprising TKO loss to Dmitry Pirog. He soon became "The Miracle Man," coming back from cancer that threatened his life and his ability to walk, never mind his ability to fight. What began in 2012 reached its greatest moment late last year, when Jacobs stopped former middleweight titleholder Peter Quillin in the opening round. The speed and power shown in the victory make Jacobs an interesting piece of the puzzle at 160. Jacobs' team didn't capitalize, however. His next fight didn't come until nine months later, when he faced Sergio Mora in a rematch of a 2015 bout that Jacobs won in two when Mora injured his ankle while being knocked down. Jacobs needed longer to beat Mora this time, but there was no dispute when he ended things in the seventh.

The Future: Jacobs, who is Gennady Golovkin's mandatory challenger, says he'll return in December.

30.



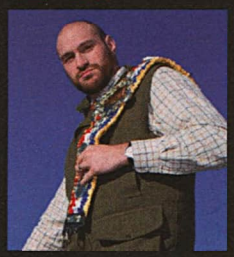
GARY **RUSSELL JR.**

The Rundown: Featherweight (WBC title) ★ Record: 27-1 (16 KOs) ★ Last year: 41 ▲

The Reasons: There's no more need for Russell to take on the Patrick Hylands of the world. We know what he can do against lesser opponents. We want to see how he fares against the cream of the 126-pound division. After an agonizingly slow first five years as a pro, Russell finally went in against someone on his level, losing to Vasyl Lomachenko via majority decision in a defeat that Russell still wants to avenge. He captured a world title nine months later, however, blowing away Jhonny Gonzalez in four rounds with blinding hand speed and devastating power. Yet an injury canceled a bout with Oscar Escandon, and so his first defense came a year after his title win, with Hyland obliterated in two this past April. The good news? He shares adviser Al Haymon with a handful of the top featherweights, including Jesus Cuellar, Carl Frampton, Abner Mares, Leo Santa Cruz and Lee Selby.

The Future: Russell's next move was not yet official.

31.



TYSON **FURY**

The Rundown: Heavyweight (RING title) ★ Record: 25-0 (18 KOs) ★ Last year: 85 ▲

The Reasons: Fury last year accomplished what 17 other men had failed to do in 18 fights since 2006 – dethrone Wladimir Klitschko. The 6-foot-9 Englishman's game plan in Dusseldorf, Germany, was a wise one. His movement and hand speed flummoxed Klitschko, who couldn't land his jab with consistency and because of that was unable to follow up with other shots. While others wanted to crush Klitschko, Fury cruised to a unanimous decision in Klitschko territory, a huge victory for someone whose biggest victories to date had come against Dereck Chisora and Steve Cunningham. But a series of incidents have kept him from proving that it wasn't a fluke. Two scheduled fights with Klitschko were canceled, the first because of a Fury ankle injury and the second because of his psychological issues. Then came news of a positive test for cocaine and just as we went to press Fury vacated his WBA and WBO titles.

The Future: When or if Fury would fight again was unclear.

32.

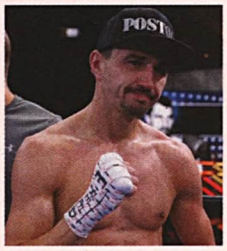
NONITO **DONAIRE**

The Rundown: Junior featherweight (WBO title) ★ Record: 37-3 (24 KOs) ★ Last year: 42 ▲

The Reasons: Donaire wisely saw his TKO loss to Nicholas Walters in 2014 as a sign he should depart from 126 and head back down to 122. Two easy victories put Donaire in position for a title shot, but instead of challenging Scott Quigg, he ended up fighting for a vacant belt against the less-threatening Cesar Juarez in late 2015. Juarez wasn't going to make it easy for Donaire, though. The fighters went to war, with "The Filipino Flash" winning by unanimous decision. The first defense of his second reign in the division came in April, when he finished Zsolt Bedak in three. Donaire also held titles at 112, 118 and 126. His first stint at junior featherweight concluded with a loss to Guillermo Rigondeaux. There's no shame in those losses, but it does show a tendency to fall short against top-level fighters.

The Future: Donaire was scheduled to defend against Jessie Magdaleno on the Nov. 5 Pacquiao-Vargas card.

33.



VIKTOR **POSTOL**

The Rundown: Junior welterweight ★ Record: 28-1 (12 KOs) ★ Last year: 34 ▲

The Reasons: When Danny Garcia left the 140-pound division, that left Lucas Matthysse as the de facto top guy in the weight class. That is, until Matthysse stepped in with Postol, who frustrated the Argentine and put him down with a hard shot that caused an eye injury and made Matthysse call it a night in the 10th round. That set up Postol for a bout with Terence Crawford this past July, pitting the two best junior welterweights against each other. Crawford put Postol down twice and boxed his way to an easy unanimous decision, showing just how wide a gap there is between Nos. 1 and 2 at 140. Postol was taken out of his element and looked unable to adjust against a great opponent.

The Future: Postol's first bout back had not been announced.

34.

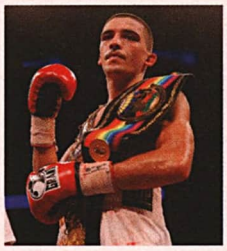
ANSELMO **MORENO**

The Rundown: Bantamweight ★ Record: 36-5-1 (12 KOs) ★ Last year: 25 ▼

The Reasons: The record reads that Moreno has lost three of his last four and four of his last seven. Moreno, who held a world title from 2008 to 2014, is better than that record indicates. After all, the first loss in that stretch came against a very good Abner Mares in 2012 when Moreno tried to jump from 118 to 122. The second loss came in a cut-shortened six-rounder against Juan Carlos Payano in 2014; Moreno started too slow and paid for it when the fight suddenly was over. The third loss came to one of boxing's best, bantamweight titleholder Shinsuke Yamanaka, and many argued that Moreno deserved to win that 2015 fight. But when they had a rematch this past September, Moreno couldn't avoid Yamanaka anywhere near as often this time, visiting the canvas four times and losing in the seventh round by technical knockout.

The Future: Moreno says he might try to go to 122 again.

35.



LEE **SELBY**

The Rundown: Featherweight (IBF title) ★ Record: 23-1 (8 KOs) ★ Last year: 70 ▲

The Reasons: The saying goes that it's not whether you get knocked down but whether you get back up. In boxing that can be both literal and figurative, with fighters getting stern tests or taking losses and then seeing whether they can improve and learn from the experience. Selby's loss on points in his fifth pro fight back in 2009 didn't derail him. He soon went on to beat future 130-pound contender Stephen Smith, continued on the path from prospect to contender and outpointed Evgeny Gradovich for a world title in 2015. In his first defense, Selby outpointed former 112-, 115- and 118-pound titleholder Fernando Montiel and then held off a competitive challenge from Eric Hunter this past April. Hunter floored Selby with a left hook in the second round and made the titleholder work for it. Selby triumphed and now wants big fights against the other top 126-pounders.

The Future: Unification with Gary Russell Jr. was being teased earlier this year, but there's been no announcement of what's next.

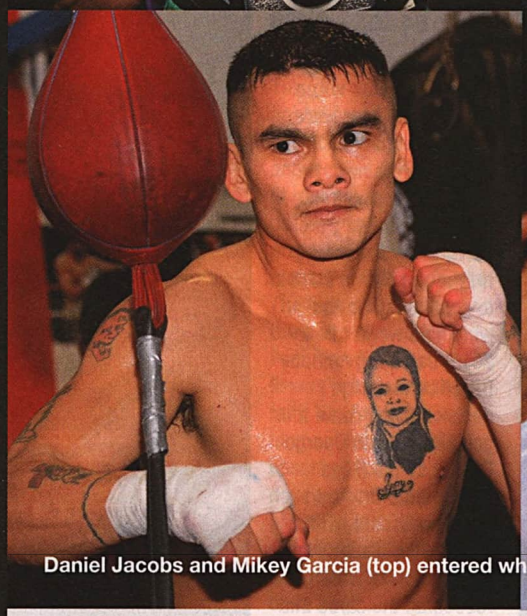
36.

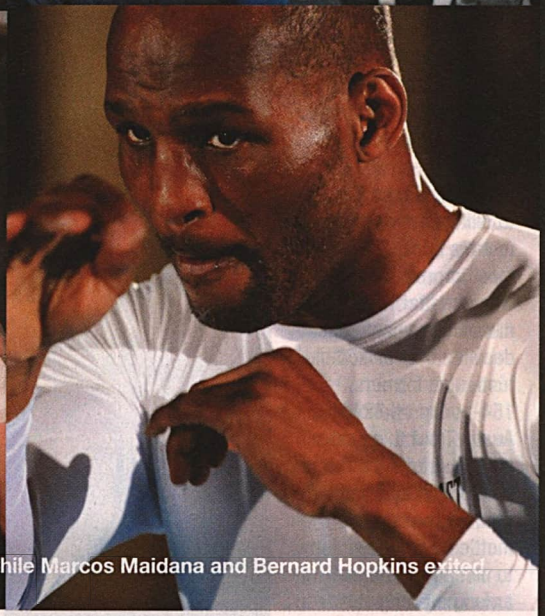
OLEKSANDR **USYK**

The Rundown: Cruiserweight (WBO title) ★ Record: 10-0 (9 KOs) ★ Last year: unranked ▲

The Reasons: Like his Ukrainian teammate Vasyl Lomachenko, Usyk is another former acclaimed amateur who quickly progressed from Olympic gold to a pro world title. Usyk finished at the top of the podium at the 2012 Games at heavyweight, which is the equivalent of a pro cruiserweight, and so 200 was where he entered the paid ranks in 2013. Less than three years later, he was in his first title shot. Usyk's opponent was Krzysztof Glowacki, who had owned his belt for a little more than a year but was a nonetheless capable and respected titleholder. Glowacki, after all, had ended the long reign of Marco Huck with a come-from-behind knockout and then had defended with a decision over Steve Cunningham. But Usyk easily outboxed Glowacki with vastly superior hand and foot speed, taking a wide victory on the scorecards. He's a talented addition to an already deep division.

The Future: It wasn't yet official, but Usyk could be back in December underneath a Gennady Golovkin fight.





Daniel Jacobs and Mikey Garcia (top) entered while Marcos Maidana and Bernard Hopkins exited.

IN AND OUT

Fighters who entered the RING 100 this year and those ranked last year who departed.

IN
(This year's ranking)

29. Daniel Jacobs
36. Oleksandr Usyk
46. Mikey Garcia
51. Francisco Vargas
52. Terry Flanagan
56. Jezreel Corrales
57. Oscar Valdez
65. Luis Ortiz
67. Johnriel Casimero
70. Billy Joe Saunders
72. Anthony Joshua
74. Eduard Troyanovsky
75. Rau'shee Warren
80. Knockout CP Freshmart
84. Byron Rojas
85. Robert Easter
87. Luis Concepcion
88. Eleider Alvarez
90. Ganigan Lopez
91. Akira Yaegashi
92. Tony Bellew
94. Joseph Parker
96. Jonathan Guzman
97. Hozumi Hasegawa
98. Anthony Crolla
99. Joseph Diaz Jr.

OUT
(2015 ranking)

18. Amnat Ruenroeng
30. Bernard Hopkins
33. Grigory Drozd
40. Peter Quillin
49. Marcos Maidana
54. Yoan Pablo Hernandez
58. Ruslan Provodnikov
59. Arthur Abraham
63. Javier Fortuna
68. Andy Lee
69. Omar Narvaez
72. Tomoki Kameda
75. Andre Dirrell
76. Denis Shafikov
77. Cesar Cuenca
79. Koki Kameda
84. Austin Trout
87. George Groves
88. Anthony Dirrell
89. McJoe Arroyo
90. Moruti Mthalane
92. Vanes Martirosyan
94. Juergen Braehmer
95. Ilunga Makabu
96. Amir Imam
97. Julio Ceja

37.

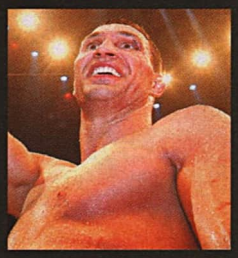
DEMETRIUS ANDRADE

The Rundown: Junior middleweight ★ Record: 23-0 (16 KOs) ★ Last year: 57 ▲

The Reasons: The 154-pound weight class moved on in Andrade's absence. Now he is back and making moves once again. That's good news for a fighter who once had a world title, only to turn down a fight with Jermell Charlo, have a spat with his promoters, sit on the shelf for 16 months and lose his belt. Andrade came back in 2015 with no leverage but with a reconciled relationship with his promoters. That allowed him to appear underneath a Ruslan Provodnikov fight on Showtime in June. Andrade looked very good as he floored Willie Nelson four times and scored a 12th-round technical knockout. It was the kind of performance he needed on a network that has invested in the numerous young talents and titleholders at junior middleweight.

The Future: Andrade is expected to face the 22-1 Jack Culcay in Germany on Nov. 5.

38.



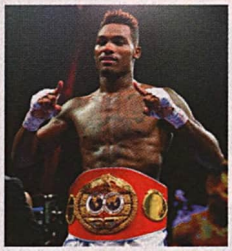
WLADIMIR KLITSCHKO

The Rundown: Heavyweight ★ Record: 64-4 (53 KOs) ★ Last year: 6 ▼

The Reasons: Klitschko is no longer in the Top 10 for the first time in six years. He went down without going down — and he went down without much of a fight. Klitschko had rebuilt himself after some early setbacks and gone unbeaten for 11 years. He'd held a world title for 9½ years and made 18 successful defenses. The way to dethrone Klitschko, it was thought, was to crack a chin that failed him repeatedly long ago. Tyson Fury didn't need to. Instead, Fury cracked a code, making Klitschko's highly technical, efficient strategy work against him. Fury's speed and movement made it difficult for Klitschko to land punches. He barely threw a jab. His power punch output was even paltrier. Was Klitschko just off? Had he been made to adjust too rarely in the past to find his desperation mode? Is the most dominating heavyweight of the past decade finally getting old (he's since turned 40)? We'll have answers to those questions when Klitschko fights again.

The Future: With Fury unfit to fight, Klitschko was looking for another opponent.

39.



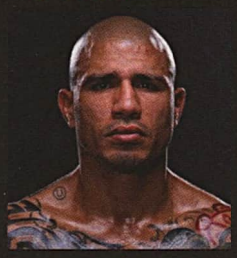
JERMALL CHARLO

The Rundown: Junior middleweight (IBF title) ★ Record: 24-0 (18 KOs) ★ Last year: 62 ▲

The Reasons: Charlo seized a world title by putting down Cornelius "K9" Bundrage in September 2015 and had an easy first defense, doing the same to Wilky Campfort two months later. But his most impressive win yet was one that went the distance: a unanimous decision over skilled, motivated former 154-pound titleholder Austin Trout this past May. Charlo faced the kind of obstacles and showed the sort of mettle he will need to distinguish himself among a young and talented class of junior middleweights. On the same broadcast as Charlo-Trout, his twin brother, Jermell, picked up a vacant title. They may not reign together long, as Jermall has a tough challenge next and might head up to middleweight soon even if he wins.

The Future: There is a good match on the horizon against Julian Williams, an unbeaten and highly touted contender who will himself be taking a big step up by facing Charlo.

40.



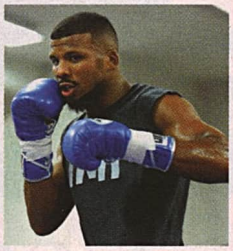
MIGUEL COTTO

The Rundown: Junior middleweight ★ Record: 40-5 (33 KOs) ★ Last year: 14 ▼

The Reasons: It can be difficult to figure out exactly how to rank Cotto. His title reigns at 140 and 147 can be considered for Hall of Fame voting but are too long ago to be given much weight here. Next was his reign at 154, which came against weaker opposition (Yuri Foreman, Ricardo Mayorga, the damaged version of Antonio Margarito) before ending with a loss to Floyd Mayweather Jr., followed by a loss to Austin Trout. But then he became the lineal middleweight champion, demolishing a Sergio Martinez who had one good leg. He then drained Daniel Geale for a TKO win before meeting Canelo Alvarez last November. Cotto dropped a decision to our No. 8 fighter on this list and hasn't fought since. He does deserve some credit. The jury remains out. We'll know more about where he stands once he stands in against fighters who are his size, good and in good health.

The Future: We'll see whether his early 2017 date brings that; a rumored bout with Lamont Peterson wouldn't.

41.



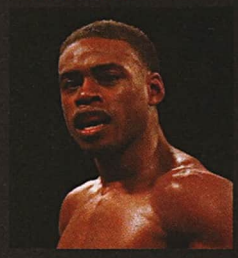
BADOU JACK

The Rundown: Super middleweight (WBC title) ★ Record: 20-1-2 (12 KOs) ★ Last year: 64 ▲

The Reasons: Those of us who wrote off Jack one year were soon writing about him again the next. He went from losing to tough but limited Derek Edwards by a stunning first-round TKO in 2014 to competing for and winning a world title in 2015, defeating Anthony Dirrell by majority decision. Then came a good battle with George Groves on the Floyd Mayweather Jr.-Andre Berto undercard, with Jack taking a split decision. Jack was robbed on the cards this past April but retained his belt in a draw with Lucian Bute, who tested positive for a banned substance afterward. Jack is a success story and deserves credit. He has learned from his one defeat but has been alarmed at how close the judges have been to giving him a second.

The Future: Jack is expected to have a unification bout with James DeGale before 2016 is over.

42.



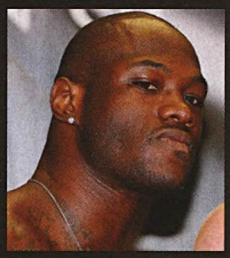
ERROL SPENCE

The Rundown: Welterweight ★ Record: 21-0 (18 KOs) ★ Last year: 80 ▲

The Reasons: The eye test isn't everything, not when there are other, more reliable tests that must take place. Spence sure looked as if he had the potential to be the next big thing when he was scoring TKOs over lower-tier welterweights, working his way up toward guys who won't ever be on top, like Phil Lo Greco and Chris Van Heerden. This year brought the next phase: Spence dominated Chris Algieri (who lost badly to Manny Pacquiao and dropped a competitive outing with Amir Khan) and Leonard Bundu (who was outboxed by Keith Thurman). Neither had the power or the skill level to bother Spence. That must come next. Then we won't need to be basing our opinion on the eye test anymore. By that point, all eyes will be on him.

The Future: Unfortunately, one major looming challenge no longer exists. Spence is Kell Brook's mandatory. Brook is probably done at 147, though. Spence will likely fight an easier foe for the vacant title.

43.



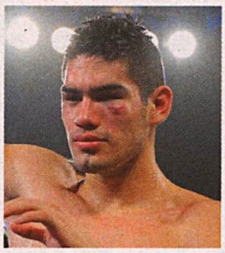
DEONTAY **WILDER**

The Rundown: Heavyweight (WBC title) ★ Record: 37-0 (36 KOs) ★ Last year: 61 ▲

The Reasons: Wilder has been ready to show that he's, well, ready. Before he fought for a world title, there were those who questioned his skillset while acknowledging his considerable power. Wilder continued to improve, bested Bermane Stiverne for a belt in early 2015 and has made four successful defenses since. The first three were against Eric Molina, Johann Duhaupas and Artur Szpilka. Wilder dispatched them all, but he couldn't fully dispel his doubters who felt he should've done better and faced better. That opportunity was supposed to come against Alexander Povetkin in May, but the fight was called off with days to go when Povetkin came up positive for a banned substance. Wilder instead stayed busy against Chris Arreola in July, winning easily but hurting his hand and biceps in the process.

The Future: Wilder is out for the rest of 2016. Next year should bring a tune-up fight or two before a potential collision with British big man Anthony Joshua in a unification bout.

44.



GILBERTO **RAMIREZ**

The Rundown: Super middleweight (WBO title) ★ Record: 34-0 (24 KOs) ★ Last year: 82 ▲

The Reasons: This promising young fighter faced a significant obstacle earlier this year and cleared it with plenty of room to spare, shutting out longtime 168-pound presence Arthur Abraham and taking his world title. The fact that it came on the undercard of Manny Pacquiao-Timothy Bradley III was because of the faith Top Rank has in him, cultivated as they observed Ramirez's development. He turned pro at 18 in 2009, gave Rogelio Medina his first loss in 2010 (Medina went on to beat J'Leon Love and battle James DeGale) and continued to meet and defeat middleweight and super middleweight journeymen and measuring sticks. That readied him for his recent run: outpointing Maxim Vlasov, Derek Edwards, Gevorg Khatchikian and then Abraham. Ramirez now should move on to proving himself against the top talent in his division.

The Future: A hand injury precluded Ramirez from appearing on the Terence Crawford-Viktor Postol pay-per-view card in July. His return date hadn't been announced.

45.

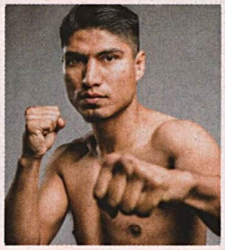
NICHOLAS **WALTERS**

The Rundown: Junior lightweight ★ Record: 26-0-1 (21 KOs) ★ Last year: 17 ▼

The Reasons: The "Axe Man" chopped down Vic Darchinyan and Nonito Donaire in 2014, winning a world title and making himself a significant part of the featherweight conversation. There's not much good that can be said about what's happened since. Walters was ill at the start of 2015, came in overweight to lose the title on the scales before outpointing Miguel Marriaga and then made the necessary move up to 130. He wrapped up the year with a draw against Jason Sosa that should've gone Walters' way – a performance that looks even better now that Sosa has gone on to unseat Javier Fortuna. That was it for Walters. He stubbornly stayed out of the ring for most of 2016, turning down the terms offered for a June fight with Vasyl Lomachenko, who even offered an extra cut of the cash, had Walters won.

The Future: But Walters will return, and against Lomachenko at that, after accepting terms for a Nov. 26 bout.

46.



MIKEY **GARCIA**

The Rundown: Lightweight ★ Record: 35-0 (29 KOs) ★ Last year: unranked ▲

The Reasons: Garcia dropped off this list last year because of extended inactivity, but he returned to the ring and these rankings with a July stoppage of Elio Rojas. That win doesn't merit this spot. Rather, we recall what Garcia once was before he sat out for 2½ years because of promotional issues, and we believe that Garcia can contend in the 135-pound division, which is where he said he was headed after coming in at 138 for Rojas. Some stability would be good. The former two-division titleholder has had only one successful defense. He beat Orlando Salido by a headbutt-shortened technical decision for a belt in 2013, but gave it up five months later after coming in overweight for his demolition of a declining Juan Manuel Lopez. Then came a knockout of Roman Martinez for a title at 130, followed by a wide decision against Juan Carlos Burgos in early 2014 ... and then nothing until 2016.

The Future: Garcia was expected to challenge lightweight titleholder Dejan Zlaticanin.

47.

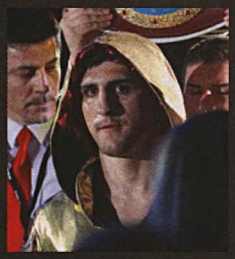
KRZYSZTOF **GLOWACKI**

The Rundown: Cruiserweight ★ Record: 26-1 (16 KOs) ★ Last year: 50 ▲

The Reasons: Glowacki was down on the canvas and remained down on the scorecards when he hurt, dropped and stopped Marco Huck in 2015, ending one of the longest cruiserweight reigns ever. Now Glowacki has to show whether he can bounce back from his first pro defeat. Glowacki's reign lasted barely 13 months, going from the Huck victory to a decision win over Steve Cunningham in which he bounced the former 200-pound titleholder off the mat four times. But then he stepped in with Oleksandr Usyk this September, and the 2012 Olympic gold medalist made it seem easy against an otherwise capable Glowacki. Usyk was too fast and boxed too well. Glowacki looked lost and, well, lost. He remains a worthy contender for any of the other cruiserweight beltholders.

The Future: It was too early to know when Glowacki would be back.

48.



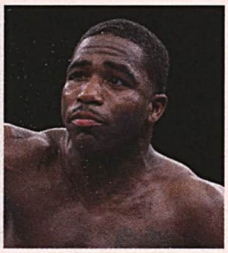
MARCO HUCK

The Rundown:
Cruiserweight ★ Record: 39-3-1 (27 KOs) ★ Last year: 53 ▲

The Reasons:
Sometimes there's a robbery. Sometimes there's an early stoppage. Neither of those happened to Marco Huck. He was put down twice by Krzysztof Glowacki in August 2015, ending a fight that Huck was winning going into the 11th round and ending a cruiserweight reign that dated back six years and included 12 wins and one draw. Nevertheless, Huck can find a silver lining in two things: He was ahead before Glowacki came back and caught him, and Glowacki has also shown himself to be a pretty good cruiserweight. Huck now needs to prove that he's still a pretty good 200-pounder himself. His first step back came in February, when he stopped Ola Afolabi in the fourth fight of their series, sending Afolabi into retirement. That was Huck's only fight of 2016.

The Future:
Huck's September fight with Ovill McKenzie was postponed.

49.



ADRIEN BRONER

The Rundown:
Junior welterweight ★ Record: 32-2 (24 KOs) ★ Last year: 52 ▲

The Reasons:
It says a lot about boxing in general, and Broner in particular, that he has world titles in four weight classes (130, 135, 140 and 147) but his biggest victory was over Paulie Malignaggi. There's a big gap between the opponents he has beaten and those he has lost to. Broner courageously defended his welterweight title against Marcos Maidana in 2013, only to be dropped and defeated. He wisely went down to junior welterweight afterward, killing time in three fights until a meeting with Shawn Porter at a catchweight of 144 that Broner demanded. Porter easily outworked him for the victory. Yet Broner was then gifted a fight for a vacant title at 140, stopping Khabib Allakhverdiev. He came in overweight for his first defense, a stoppage of the handpicked, overmatched Ashley Theophane. He seems to have so many tools, but he can't or won't use them to put himself completely together.

The Future:
Broner initially said he'd go to 147 but also has called out 140-pound titleholder Ricky Burns.

50.

LUCAS MATTHYSSE

The Rundown:
Junior welterweight ★ Record: 37-4 (34 KOs) ★ Last year: 43 ▼

The Reasons:
Matthysse's last loss was the first time he truly felt beaten. His first two defeats, to Zab Judah in 2010 and Devon Alexander in 2011? Those were controversial split decisions. The unanimous-decision loss to Danny Garcia in 2013? It was competitive. But when Matthysse faced Viktor Postol in late 2015, he tried to break Postol down only to have Postol take over with boxing, activity and then the right hand that dropped Matthysse down for the count. He hasn't fought since, first because he was recovering from an eye injury but also because of a lack of desire to get back in the ring. That's understandable. He'd gone from blasting through a string of opponents, including Lamont Peterson in 2013, to losing his title to Garcia and then to suffering damage while winning wars over John Molina in 2014 and Ruslan Provodnikov in 2015.

The Future:
His team hopes the rest rejuvenates him. Matthysse will be back in early 2017, most likely at 147.

51.

FRANCISCO VARGAS

The Rundown:
Junior lightweight (WBC title) ★ Record: 23-0-2 (17 KOs) ★ Last year: unranked ▲

The Reasons:
Too many contenders avoid testing themselves against the better fighters in their division. Vargas did and proved himself under fire. In the 2015 Fight of the Year he handled the heat from Takashi Miura, hurting the titleholder early but then withstanding a hellacious comeback that had Vargas down in the fourth. Vargas dug deep as Miura continued trying to take the fight out of him. Then, suddenly, Vargas had Miura reeling in the ninth, then down, then done. Too many new titleholders avoid tough tests in their first defenses. Not Vargas. He then went on to face Orlando Salido this past June, again getting in the trenches and exchanging heavy artillery. The bout ended a draw. His style isn't necessarily one that makes for long reigns, but Vargas has quickly established himself as must-see. It's fitting that a fighter nicknamed "El Bandido" can steal the show.

The Future:
After two straight wars, Vargas is wisely resting and recovering. He owes a rematch to the Miura-Salido winner.

52.

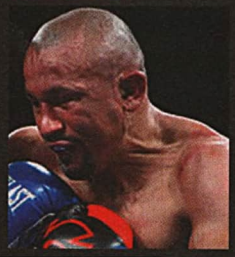
TERRY FLANAGAN

The Rundown:
Lightweight (WBO title) ★ Record: 31-0 (12 KOs) ★ Last year: unranked ▲

The Reasons:
Flanagan got his first brush with fame when he won a one-day "Prizefighter" tournament as a young prospect in 2012. He earned a much bigger prize, and far more attention, when he won a world title in 2015. The way he won it was anticlimactic, but the way he first defended it was emphatic. Flanagan picked up the vacant belt with a second-round TKO when Jose Zepeda quit with a dislocated shoulder. Three months later, Flanagan finished Diego Magdaleno in the same round but this time with three knockdowns. Since then, Flanagan has outpointed Derry Mathews and the ancient Mzonke Fana.

The Future:
Mandatory challenger Felix Verdejo was injured in a motorcycle crash. Jorge Linares has been willing to go to the U.K. but will likely have an Anthony Crolla rematch first. Juan Diaz thought Flanagan's offer was too low; Flanagan said Diaz priced himself out. So Flanagan's Nov. 12 date, if it sticks, had no opponent at press time.

53.

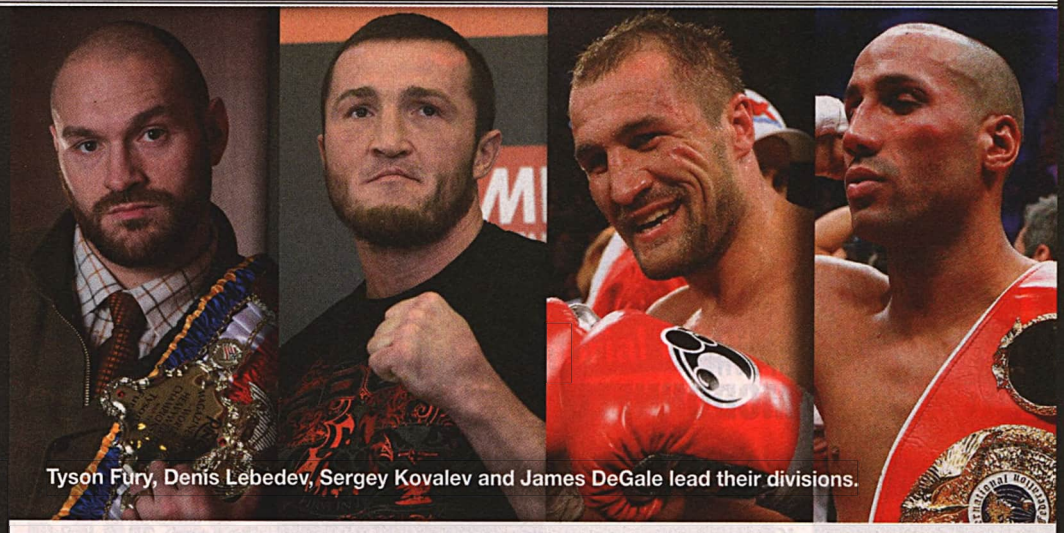


ORLANDO SALIDO

The Rundown: Junior lightweight ★ Record: 43-13-4 (30 KOs) ★ Last year: 51 ▼

The Reasons: Salido continues to be in very good fights and faces good fighters despite two decades in the sport (he turns 36 in November) and moments that seemed to suggest his inevitable decline. Put aside the losses suffered when he was still a novice and you'll notice that the other defeats came against noteworthy names and titleholders such as Yuriorkis Gamboa, Mikey Garcia, Juan Manuel Marquez, Cristobal Cruz and Roman Martinez. The longtime featherweight dropped his belt on the scales before edging Vasyl Lomachenko controversially in 2014 and then captured one at 130 following a war with Terdsak Kokietgym. Salido lost it in his first defense, a tilt with Martinez that saw Salido come off the canvas, as has become increasingly common. He was robbed in their rematch, a draw, but earned himself another night in the spotlight by battling to a draw with titleholder Francisco Vargas in June.

The Future: Salido will face former titleholder Takashi Miura on Dec. 17 in another expected war. The winner gets Vargas again.



Tyson Fury, Denis Lebedev, Sergey Kovalev and James DeGale lead their divisions.

RING *100* BY DIVISION

THE NUMBER OF RANKED FIGHTERS IN EACH OF THE 17 WEIGHT CLASSES

HEAVYWEIGHT
31. Tyson Fury
38. Wladimir Klitschko
43. Deontay Wilder
58. Alexander Povetkin
65. Luis Ortiz
72. Anthony Joshua
94. Joseph Parker

CRUISERWEIGHT
23. Denis Lebedev
36. Oleksandr Usyk
47. Krzysztof Glowacki
48. Marco Huck
92. Tony Bellew

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHT
2. Sergey Kovalev
4. Andre Ward
24. Adonis Stevenson
76. Artur Beterbiev
88. Eleider Alvarez

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHT
25. James DeGale
41. Badou Jack
44. Gilberto Ramirez

MIDDLEWEIGHT
3. Gennady Golovkin
8. Canelo Alvarez
29. Daniel Jacobs
70. Billy Joe Saunders
81. David Lemieux

JUNIOR MIDDLEWEIGHT
8. Canelo Alvarez
19. Erislandy Lara
37. Demetrius Andrade
39. Jermall Charlo
40. Miguel Cotto
62. Jermell Charlo
79. Julian Williams

WELTERWEIGHT
12. Manny Pacquiao
13. Kell Brook
16. Danny Garcia
17. Keith Thurman
18. Timothy Bradley
27. Shawn Porter
42. Errol Spence
60. Lamont Peterson
64. Amir Khan
68. Jessie Vargas

JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHT
5. Terence Crawford
21. Rances Barthelemy
33. Viktor Postol
49. Adrien Broner
50. Lucas Matthysse
74. Eduard Troyanovsky

LIGHTWEIGHT
26. Jorge Linares
46. Mikey Garcia
52. Terry Flanagan
54. Dejan Zlaticanin
85. Robert Easter Jr.
98. Anthony Crolla

JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHT
7. Vasyl Lomachenko
45. Nicholas Walters
51. Francisco Vargas
53. Orlando Salido
56. Jezreel Corrales
59. Takashi Uchiyama
63. Takashi Miura
82. Jose Pedraza

FEATHERWEIGHT
10. Carl Frampton
20. Leo Santa Cruz
30. Gary Russell Jr.
35. Lee Selby
57. Oscar Valdez
61. Abner Mares
66. Jesus Cuellar
99. Joseph Diaz Jr.

JUNIOR FEATHERWEIGHT
6. Guillermo Rigondeaux
32. Nonito Donaire
69. Scott Quigg
96. Jonathan Guzman
97. Hozumi Hasegawa

BANTAMWEIGHT
9. Shinsuke Yamanaka
34. Anselmo Moreno
55. Jamie McDonnell
71. Zolani Tete
75. Rau'shee Warren
77. Juan Carlos Payano

JUNIOR BANTAMWEIGHT
1. Roman Gonzalez
11. Naoya Inoue
15. Juan Francisco Estrada
28. Carlos Cuadras
87. Luis Concepcion
93. Srisaket Sor Rungvisai

FLYWEIGHT
14. Donnie Nietes
22. Kazuto Ioka
67. Johnriel Casimero
78. Brian Viloria

JUNIOR FLYWEIGHT
86. Ryoichi Taguchi
89. Pedro Guevara
90. Ganigan Lopez
91. Akira Yaegashi
100. Kosei Tanaka

STRAWWEIGHT
73. Hekkie Budler
80. Knockout CP Freshmart
83. Wanheng Menayothin
84. Byron Rojas
95. Katsunari Takayama

Note: 101 fighters are listed here because Canelo Alvarez straddles two divisions.

54.

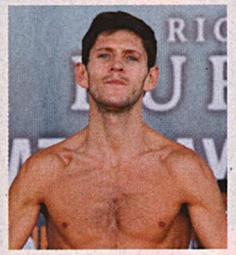
DEJAN ZLATICANIN

The Rundown: Lightweight (WBC title) ★ Record: 22-0 (15 KOs) ★ Last year: 91 ▲

The Reasons: Zlaticanin just won a world title in June, but he was taking on far more impressive opponents than Franklin Mamani well before then. There was a 2013 victory over Petr Petrov, who then won an ESPN2 "Boxcino" tournament. And there was a 2014 split decision over dethroned 135-pound titleholder Ricky Burns. But Zlaticanin's career got a nice boost when he stopped prospect Ivan Redkach in four on a Showtime Extreme undercard. That made him mandatory challenger to Jorge Linares' title. Unfortunately, Linares signed to fight in January and then pulled out with a hand injury in February, resulting in a year of inactivity for Zlaticanin. The good news is he still got the title shot and picked up the vacant belt. The better news is that title could land him even better fights than Mamani.

The Future: One potential fight is with the returning Mikey Garcia. Their collision has been rumored but was not yet reality.

55.



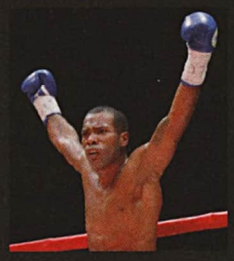
JAMIE MCDONNELL

The Rundown: Bantamweight ★ Record: 28-2-1 (13 KOs) ★ Last year: 48 ▼

The Reasons: You'd think a split-decision loss to a 10-12-3 fighter early in a prospect's career is a bad sign. You'd think two defeats in a row, the second coming against a 16-2 opponent, further dims that prospect's chances. You'd think wrong in the case of McDonnell. After that first defeat, he stopped draining himself to make 115 pounds. That second loss came against Lee Haskins, who went on to hold a world title at 118. McDonnell has gone on to good things as well, winning 20 straight over the past eight years, including a majority decision over Julio Ceja in 2013 for a world title. (Ceja went on to briefly hold a title at 122). McDonnell ditched his IBF belt for the WBA's secondary "regular" title, which we don't recognize given Rau'shee Warren's WBA "super" title, but we do of course recognize McDonnell's wins, including two competitive fights with Tomoki Kameda in 2015 and a TKO of Fernando Vargas this past April.

The Future: McDonnell will face former unifed junior batmaweight titleholder Laborio Solis on Nov. 12.

56.



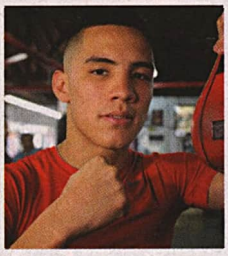
JEZREEL CORRALES

The Rundown: Junior lightweight (WBA title) ★ Record: 20-1 (8 KOs) ★ Last year: unranked ▲

The Reasons: One of the biggest surprises of 2016 came in April, when the six-year title reign of Takashi Uchiyama came to a conclusion in just six minutes. That came at the hands of Corrales, who knocked Uchiyama down three times in the second round for the technical knockout. It was Corrales' first fight outside of Panama, and it was a heck of an introduction to the world. He had lost in his second pro fight – he was 17 years old at the time – but has won every fight since, excepting a victory overturned in 2013 after Corrales tested positive for marijuana. Some may have been surprised by Corrales' power. Uchiyama clearly was. Corrales only had seven KOs going into that fight, but a majority of them had come after his recent move up to junior lightweight. The extra pounds did him good and did Uchiyama in.

The Future: Corrales-Uchiyama II is scheduled for Dec. 31.

57.



OSCAR VALDEZ

The Rundown: Featherweight (WBO title) ★ Record: 20-0 (18 KOs) ★ Last year: unranked ▲

The Reasons: Top Rank believed for years that it had a gem in Oscar Valdez, a two-time Olympian who was 17 when he competed in the 2008 Games and 21 when he made it to the quarterfinals in 2012. Valdez debuted with the promoter, which is renowned for developing prospects, at featherweight, strengthened by not having to make (and remain at) bantamweight as he'd done in the Olympics. The true step up came in 2016, when Valdez took out declining former titleholder Evgeny Gradovich in four rounds and then was in line for a title shot. Fortunately for him, Vasyl Lomachenko moved to 130 and Valdez instead fought for the vacant belt against the unbeaten but unheralded Matias Rueda, who lasted less than two rounds. It won't always be that easy, but Valdez shows the kind of promise that suggests he can handle much tougher opposition.

The Future: Valdez's first defense will be on the Nov. 5 Vargas-Pacquiao pay-per-view undercard against Hiroshige Osawa.

58.

ALEXANDER POVETKIN

The Rundown: Heavyweight ★ Record: 30-1 (22 KOs) ★ Last year: 45 ▼

The Reasons: Povetkin drew attention early in his career, bottomed out in 2013, peaked again and then hit a major stumbling block at the worst possible time. The 2004 gold medalist turned pro in 2005, was defeating guys like Chris Byrd and Eddie Chambers in 2007 and 2008 and then held off on the title shot he'd earned. It would be years until he faced another world-class opponent, outpointing Ruslan Chagaev in 2011 and then taking a controversial victory over cruiserweight Marco Huck in 2012. Finally, in 2013, Povetkin stepped in with Wladimir Klitschko and was downright embarrassed in an ugly affair. Yet he came back with fury, knocking out Manuel Charr, Carlos Takam, Mike Perez and Mariusz Wach. Povetkin was the mandatory to Deontay Wilder's title. The fight was days away. And then traces of a drug – one banned after he'd taken it, he said, but which still remained in his system – led to the fight being called off.

The Future: Povetkin vs. Bermane Stiverne, date TBA, will decide Wilder's mandatory.

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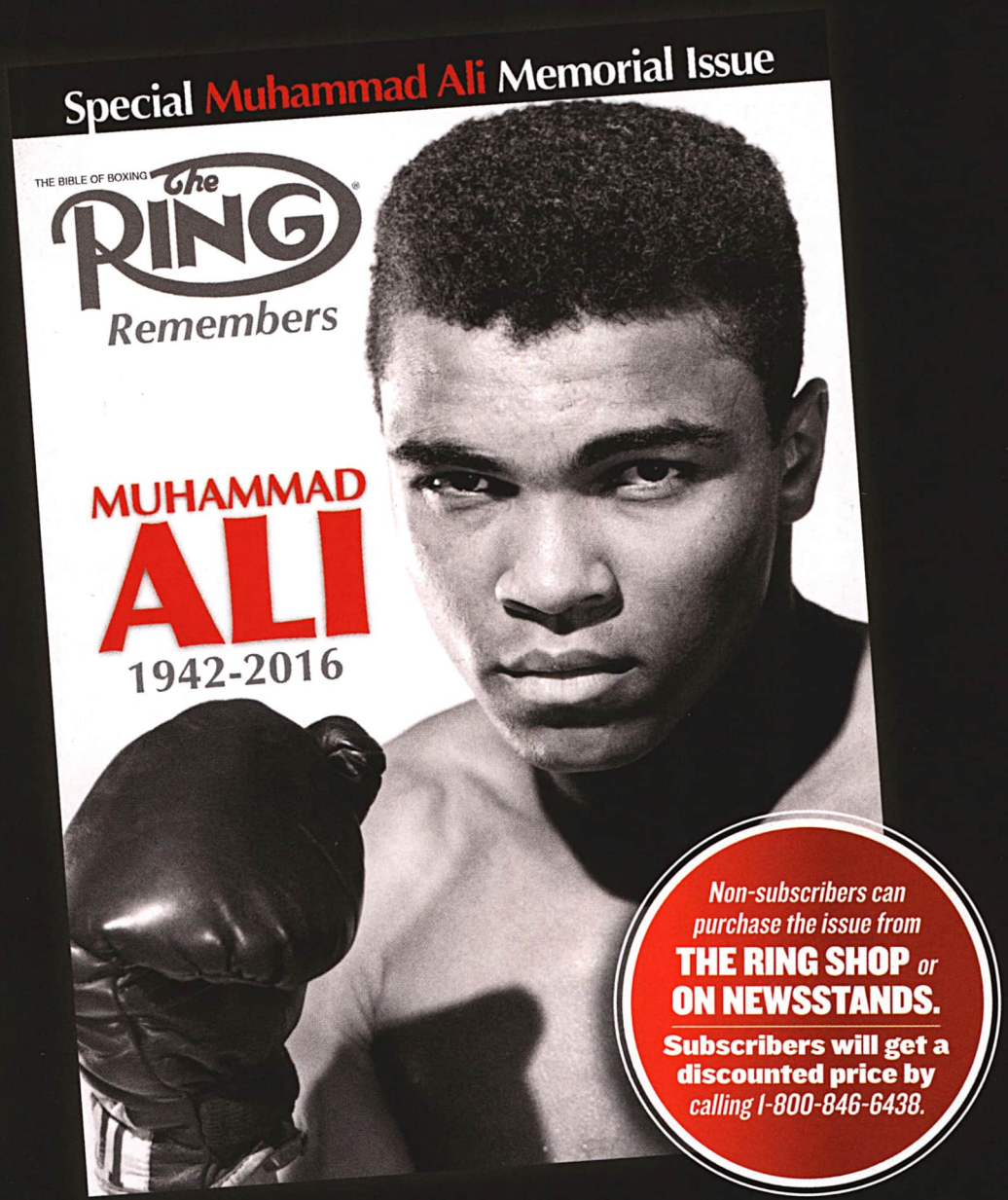
CHARTS THE COURSE OF "THE GREATEST" IN THIS SPECIAL MEMORIAL ISSUE OF THE MAGAZINE.



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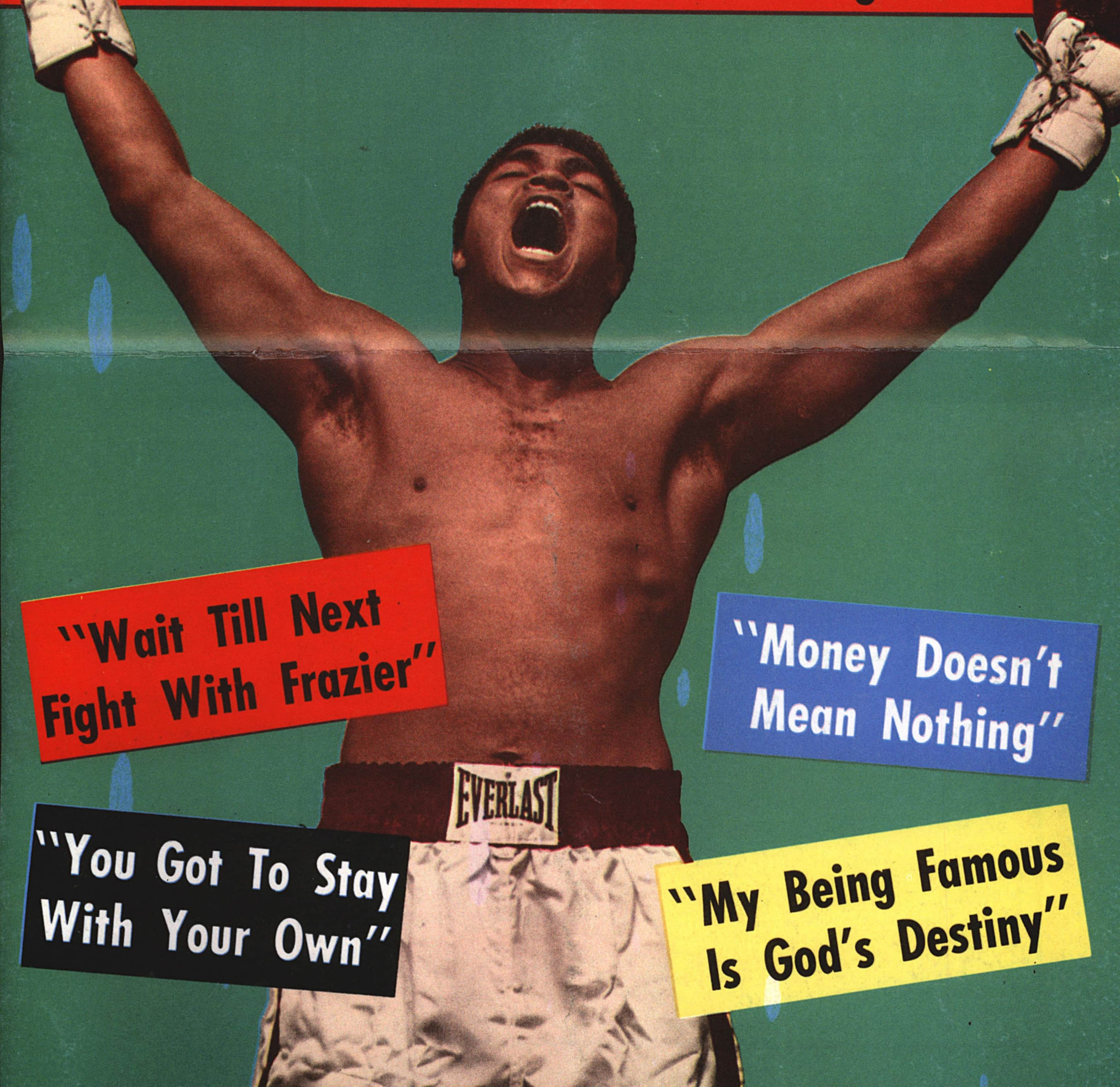

"Wait Till Next Fight With Frazier"

"Money Doesn't Mean Nothing"

"You Got To Stay With Your Own"

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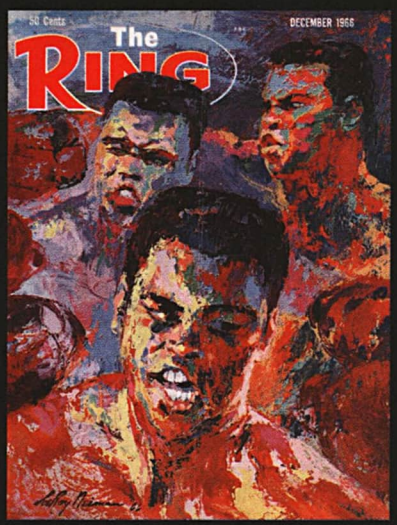
COLLECT THEM ALL!

In honor of Muhammad Ali, THE RING will include a full-color pull-out poster of "The Greatest" in each of the next nine issues of the magazine. The posters are reproductions of particularly compelling RING covers on which Ali was featured.



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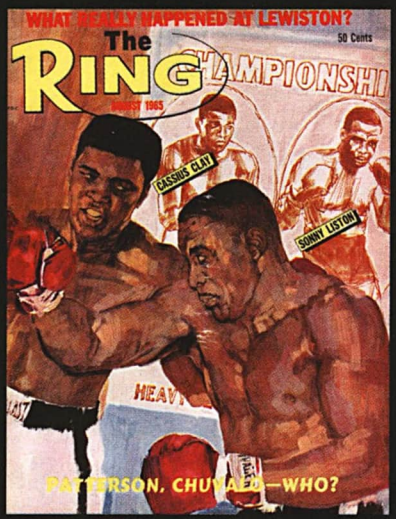

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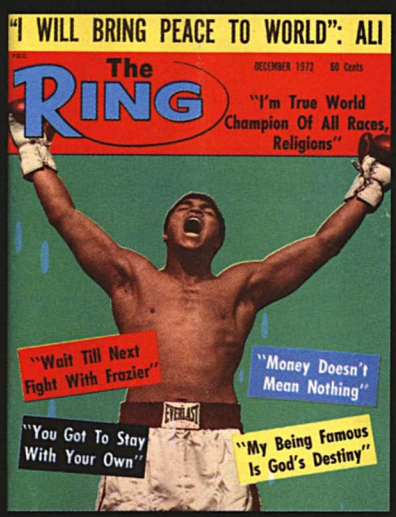
#3 DECEMBER 2016



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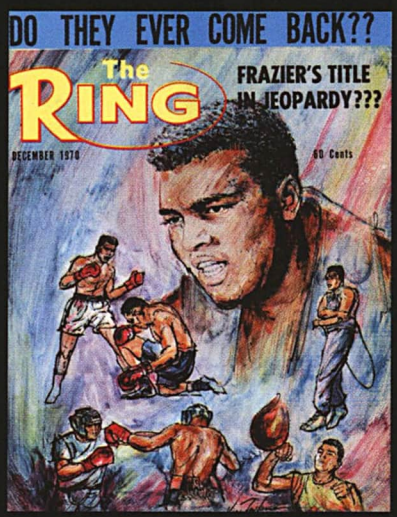

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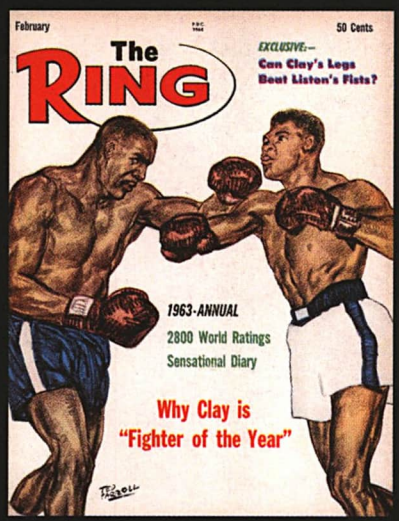

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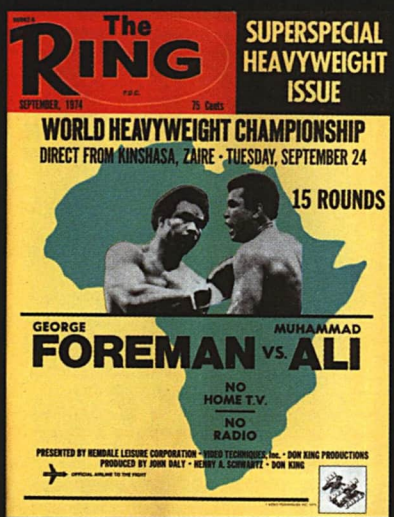

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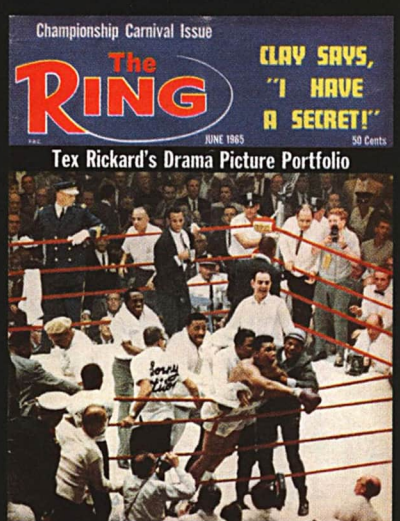


#9 AUGUST 2017

59.

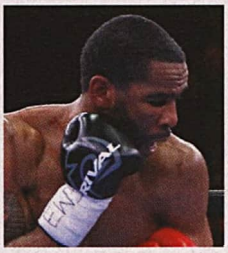
TAKASHI UCHIYAMA

The Rundown: Junior lightweight ★ Record: 24-1-1 (20 KOs) ★ Last year: 13 ▼

The Reasons: Every title reign that ends does so abruptly; it only takes one night. But that didn't make the fall of Uchiyama any less surprising. He had been a titleholder at 130 for more than six years, winning 10 times with one cut-shortened technical draw. All but one of those victories were by knockout, including one over Takashi Miura, who went on to capture a belt himself. The question was when Uchiyama would leave Japan to make the junior lightweights of the Western Hemisphere prove themselves. And then the unheralded Jezreel Corrales traveled to the Far East, dropped Uchiyama hard in the second and floored him two more times that round for the stoppage victory. Fighters get caught. It's just a question of whether Uchiyama got caught at the right time or Corrales is just better, or both. Uchiyama will be 37 when he returns. His next good test will give us a good indication of reality.

The Future: Uchiyama gets Corrales again on Dec. 31.

60.



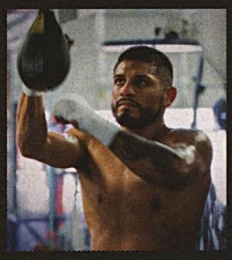
LAMONT PETERSON

The Rundown: Welterweight ★ Record: 34-3-1 (17 KOs) ★ Last year: 32 ▼

The Reasons: Peterson has been good enough to fight on the biggest stages but hasn't completely capitalized. He lost to Timothy Bradley in 2009 and drew with Victor Ortiz in 2010 before defeating Amir Khan by a controversial split decision to win two world titles in 2011. Then it was revealed Peterson used synthetic testosterone. He sat out for 13 months. Peterson was stopped in three by Lucas Matthysse in 2013 in a nontitle bout, which allowed him to go on and make two more defenses before meeting Danny Garcia at 143 in 2015. Peterson gave up the early rounds with more foot movement than hand movement, then took it to Garcia too late, dropping a close decision. Peterson didn't look great later that year while winning a controversial one of his own over gold medalist Felix Diaz; he blamed cramps for his performance. He hasn't fought since October 2015.

The Future: There was nothing on Peterson's schedule.

61.



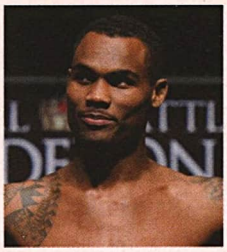
ABNER MARES

The Rundown: Featherweight ★ Record: 29-2-1 (15 KOs) ★ Last year: 55 ▼

The Reasons: Mares' run from 2010 to 2013 was impressive: He drew with Yonnhy Perez, edged Vic Darchinyan and took two decisions over Joseph Agbeko, all at bantamweight, moved up to 122 to beat Eric Morel and Anselmo Moreno, then jumped up to 126 and stopped Daniel Ponce De Leon for a world title in a third weight class. But that was all some time ago. Since then was the shocking one-round loss to Jhonny Gonzalez and then three rebuilding fights that gave him enough confidence for his bout with Leo Santa Cruz in August 2015. Santa Cruz was the better fighter that night, winning a majority decision. Mares hasn't appeared since. He wanted to prove himself against another notable featherweight but had to postpone his bout with Jesus Cuellar because of a lingering eye injury.

The Future: Mares says he's now completely healthy, but no date for Cuellar vs. Mares had been announced.

62.



JERMELL CHARLO

The Rundown: Junior middleweight (WBC title) ★ Record: 28-0 (13 KOs) ★ Last year: 66 ▲

The Reasons: One of two talented, twin 154-pounders, Jermell Charlo stepped up his level of competition before Jermall did, outpointing Gabriel Rosado in January 2014 and Vanes Martirosyan 14 months later. Jermell would've had a title shot had Demetrius Andrade not turned down a deal at the end of 2014. Instead, it was Jermall who won a world title first, in September 2015. Jermell added a strap of his own this past May. He was being outboxed by John Jackson and was well behind on the scorecards when he knocked Jackson out in the eighth. The question is whether the level he reached against Rosado and Martirosyan is about as good as he's going to get or whether he'll improve and catch up to the promise that Jermall has shown.

The Future: Charlo owes a mandatory shot to Charles Hatley. Barring that, Andrade is also waiting for a bout otherwise owed him by the Charlo-Hatley winner.

63.

TAKASHI MIURA

The Rundown: Junior lightweight ★ Record: 30-3-2 (23 KOs) ★ Last year: 36 ▼

The Reasons: Miura must have thought he was about to lose his world title without making it out of the first round against Francisco Vargas in November 2015. Then, after surviving those shaky early moments, he must've believed he was on the path to successfully defending his belt. He cut Vargas, knocked him down and sustained what seemed like Vargas' last stand before hurting him again. And, finally, Vargas turned the tables, wobbling and then flooring Miura in the ninth round. The fight was over soon after and so was a reign that dated back 2½ years and included four successful defenses. It was his first loss since 2011, when he sent titleholder Takashi Uchiyama to the canvas in the third only to be stopped in the eighth. (Uchiyama recently lost his title as well.) Miura had an easy night in his first bout back, downing Jimmy Borbon in one round in May.

The Future: Nothing will be easy when Miura goes to war with Orlando Salido on Dec. 17.

64.

AMIR KHAN

The Rundown: Welterweight ★ Record: 31-4 (19 KOs) ★ Last year: 28 ▼

The Reasons: Khan wanted Floyd Mayweather Jr., who retired. He wanted Manny Pacquiao, who instead fought Timothy Bradley again and then (briefly) retired. So Khan surprised many by finding another huge fight and a huge challenge: middleweight champ Canelo Alvarez. Khan got the big payday he so desired, and Canelo got the big KO we all expected. Khan has huge balls, especially because he doesn't have a huge chin. Now he can return to 147 and attempt to win a title in a second weight class. His reign at 140 ended with a controversial split-decision loss to a doped-up Lamont Peterson and a TKO loss to Danny Garcia. But while there, he also earned victories over Marcos Maidana, Paulie Malignaggi and Zab Judah. After moving to welterweight, he outpointed Luis Collazo and Devon Alexander and withstood some tough moments to do the same against Chris Algieri.

The Future: Khan had surgery on his right hand. He says he will be back in early 2017.

65.

LUIS ORTIZ

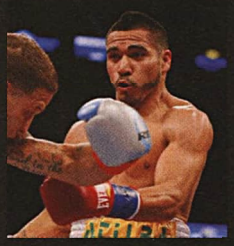
The Rundown: Heavyweight ★ Record: 25-0 (22 KOs) ★ Last year: unranked ▲

The Reasons: Ortiz is a product of the famed Cuban amateur system. His pedigree shows, though he has little time left to take advantage of it at age 37. He was delayed by a positive test for a banned substance after a first-round TKO of Lateef Kayode in 2014. But when Ortiz made his first HBO appearance in late 2015, he made an impression by taking out Bryant Jennings in seven rounds, doing what Wladimir Klitschko couldn't. Then, after other opponents fell out, Ortiz returned in March and put the ancient Tony Thompson away. He has not fought again since. One reason was his split with Golden Boy Promotions, whose network allegiances might limit future title opportunities with the likes of Deontay Wilder (who's with adviser Al Haymon) and Anthony Joshua (who's exclusive to Showtime).

The Future: Ortiz signed with Matchroom and was due to face Malik Scott on Nov. 12 in Monte Carlo.

Luis Ortiz (left) has his eye on fighting the top heavyweights as soon as possible.

66.



JESUS CUELLAR

The Rundown: Featherweight ★ Record: 28-1 (21 KOs) ★ Last year: 71 ▲

The Reasons: Cuellar's lone loss came when he squeezed himself down to 122 to fight Oscar Escandon, who won by TKO in 2011. He's now one of the top 126-pounders, but you wouldn't know that by where he seems to be in the pecking order of Al Haymon's featherweight stable. It was Leo Santa Cruz and Abner Mares who got to fight for the WBA's "super" title in 2015, which is superior to the "regular" belt he holds (and which we don't recognize when it's secondary). Santa Cruz beat Mares and later lost to Carl Frampton. Cuellar is at least important enough to be featured regularly on undercards, perhaps setting him up for something bigger later on. Last year, he knocked out Vic Darchinyan under a Robert Guerrero fight and then outpointed Jonathan Oquendo under Daniel Jacobs-Peter Quillin. This year, Cuellar was supposed to face Mares under Keith Thurman-Shawn Porter, but Mares pulled out with an eye injury.

The Future: Mares is healthy again. Cuellar still hasn't fought in 2016.

67.

JOHNRIEL CASIMERO

The Rundown: Flyweight (IBF title) ★ Record: 23-3 (15 KOs) ★ Last year: unranked ▲

The Reasons: Casimero has been in difficult situations, most notably and terrifyingly when he stopped Luis Lazarte in Argentina and had to escape as a riot broke out. That led to a world title down at 108, a brief reign that lasted from 2012 to 2014, until Casimero couldn't even come close to making the weight anymore. Instead, he moved up to 112 and soon traveled to Thailand to face awkward titleholder Amnat Ruenroeng. The ref allowed Ruenroeng to hold, tackle and toss Casimero. Ruenroeng won that 2015 bout by decision. Casimero didn't allow any of that to happen 11 months later in China, where he put Ruenroeng down twice in the fourth round for the win and the belt. For his first defense, Casimero went to hostile territory again, stopping the inexperienced Charlie Edwards in the U.K.

The Future: Casimero's second defense wasn't set.

68.

JESSIE VARGAS

The Rundown: Welterweight (WBO title) ★ Record: 27-1 (10 KOs) ★ Last year: 86 ▲

The Reasons: Vargas has done something Devon Alexander couldn't do and something Robert Guerrero couldn't do convincingly: beat Aron Martinez. But a lot of controversy surrounded more important bouts for Vargas, with debated decisions over Josesito Lopez in 2011 and Khabib Allakhverdiev and Anton Novikov in 2014. He has improved from those performances, beginning with the way he defeated Antonio DeMarco two years ago. Vargas got a shot at Timothy Bradley in 2015 and was losing clearly when he staggered Bradley in the waning moments. The referee jumped in too early, thinking he heard the final bell. Vargas thought he was deprived of a chance to win. He rebounded nicely, though. When Bradley ditched his belt for a third Pacquiao fight, Vargas fought for it against Sadam Ali this past March. Vargas stopped Ali in nine. That and sharing a promoter with Pacquiao has landed him a second big chance and a huge first defense.

The Future: Vargas-Pacquiao was set for Nov. 5 in Las Vegas.

69.

SCOTT QUIGG

The Rundown: Junior featherweight ★ Record: 31-1-2 (22 KOs) ★ Last year: 44 ▼

The Reasons: It's tempting to criticize Quigg for the way he came up short in his biggest fight, given how slowly and tentatively he started against Carl Frampton in February before coming on stronger later on, ultimately losing a split decision. It's better to remember that Quigg fought through a broken jaw for most of that fight and did so against someone so talented. That will motivate Quigg to rebound from his first setback, a defeat that ended the five-fight winning streak that followed his 2013 draw with Yoandris Salinas. Four of those opponents – Diego Silva, Tshifhiwa Munyai, Stephane Jamoye and Kiko Martinez – didn't make it past the second or third round, while Hidenori Otake lasted the distance.

The Future: Quigg had spoken of remaining at 122 and even potentially facing Guillermo Rigondeaux, but he will be at 126 when he fights in Dec.

70.

BILLY JOE SAUNDERS

The Rundown: Middleweight (WBO title) ★ Record: 23-0 (12 KOs) ★ Last year: unranked ▲

The Reasons: Saunders, a 2008 Olympian, began his transition from prospect to contender in 2012, when he stopped previously unbeaten Jarrod Fletcher in two and soon after defeated a string of four fighters with unblemished records, culminating with a split decision over Chris Eubank Jr. toward the end of 2014. By the end of 2015, Saunders was in a world title fight with Andy Lee, scoring two knockdowns in the third round and hearing his name announced the winner of a relatively close majority decision. If only he'd made good decisions since then. After turning down a Gennady Golovkin fight, Saunders signed to face Max Bursak but suffered an injury before the bout. He failed to reach deals with Daniel Jacobs, Golovkin again and even Canelo Alvarez. His world title gives him leverage, but he may have to take a smaller deal than he wants in order to become a bigger deal.

The Future: Saunders was due to face some dude named Artur Akavov on Oct. 22.

71.

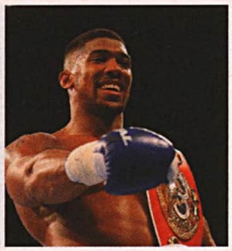
ZOLANI TETE

The Rundown: Bantamweight ★ Record: 24-3 (20 KOs) ★ Last year: 74 ▲

The Reasons: Tete, of South Africa, has found a second home fighting for Frank Warren. He stopped Paul Butler in Liverpool in 2015 and returned there twice in 2016, taking out Jose Gonzalez and Victor Ruiz by TKO. Tete was stopped by 112-pound titleholder Moruti Mthalane in 2010 and then lost close decisions at 115 in elimination bouts with Juan Alberto Rosas in 2011 and Roberto Domingo Sosa in 2012. After a KO of Juan Carlos Sanchez in 2013, Tete won a vacant belt a year later, defended it against Butler and then gave it up, unhappy with the payment offered to face mandatory challenger McJoe Arroyo. Two other notable bantamweights hail from the U.K.: titleholder Lee Haskins and contender Jamie McDonnell. Tete wants Haskins and another title; his reign at 115 was brief after a long wait to have a title to begin with.

The Future: Nothing was set. Tete also says he can still make 115 if need be.

72.



ANTHONY JOSHUA

The Rundown: Heavyweight (IBF title) ★ Record: 17-0 (17 KOs) ★ Last year: unranked ▲

The Reasons: The era of the tall heavyweight continues, from Lennox Lewis to Vitali and Wladimir Klitschko to Tyson Fury. Two other titleholders today tower high. Deontay Wilder is a 2008 Olympic bronze medalist who learned on the job while knocking everyone out before winning a title in 2015. Joshua is a 2012 gold medalist who put away everyone he faced en route to capturing a belt of his own this past April, making easy work of the vulnerable Charles Martin in two. Already a star in the United Kingdom, Joshua headlined in London once again in June, needing seven rounds to put away the tough-willed but limited Dominic Breazeale. Neither of them tested Joshua like Dillian Whyte did in their rough-and-tumble tilt late last year. Joshua, like Wilder, is also continuing to develop, and like Wilder his speed and power have been impressive so far. He also needs better competition.

The Future: Joshua was scheduled to fight on Nov. 26 in Manchester. He was trying to make a deal with the suddenly available Klitschko.

73.

HEKKIE BUDLER

The Rundown: Strawweight ★ Record: 29-2 (9 KOs) ★ Last year: 39 ▼

The Reasons: The fact that we rank Budler ahead of the man who beat him — and the man who beat the man who beat him — is indicative of how good he'd shown himself to be until then, and because we wonder if he just had an off night in a close fight against Byron Rojas in March. "I know what the problem was and I wasn't at my best," Budler said later. Budler, previously a contender at 108, had only lost once before – a split decision to Gideon Buthelezi in 2011. That sent him down to 105, where he rattled off 12 straight victories, picking up a vacant world title in 2014 and defending it with four victories, including decisions over former titleholder Xiong Zhao Zhong and contender Jesus Silvestre. There also was a split decision over former titleholder Nkosinathi Joyi in 2013.

The Future: Budler was due to face Siyabonga Siyo at junior flyweight on Oct. 22.

74.

EDUARD TROYANOVSKY

The Rundown: Junior welterweight (IBF title) ★ Record: 25-0 (22 KOs) ★ Last year: unranked ▲

The Reasons: Troyanovsky turned pro relatively late, at 29. He's now 36 and making the most of what little time he might have left. In late 2015, he took on Cesar Cuenca, who had recently picked up a world title and was entering the bout with an eye-catching and head-scratching record of 48-0 with 2 knockouts. The fight was likely to end in one of two ways: Cuenca by decision or Troyanovsky by knockout. It was the latter that happened, with Troyanovsky getting the TKO and the title in six rounds. Their rematch came this past April. This time Troyanovsky stopped Cuenca in seven. Troyanovsky's second defense came in September, when he met another self-fashioned knockout artist in Keita Obara. We quickly saw that Obara's chin couldn't take Troyanovsky's shots. The fight was over in less than five minutes.

The Future: Defense No. 3 hasn't been announced. Troyanovsky is hoping for unification bouts as well.

75.

RAU'SHEE WARREN

The Rundown: Bantamweight (WBA title) ★ Record: 14-1 (4 KOs) ★ Last year: unranked ▲

The Reasons: While most of the attention on the 2012 U.S. Olympic team has gone to Errol Spence, it is Warren who was the first from that group to win a world title. He was ready to turn pro after London, given it was his third trip to the Games, but his team still moved him somewhat slowly in the early years as he got more accustomed to the paid ranks. Then they saw an opening: Juan Carlos Payano had upset Anselmo Moreno in a fluky manner, starting fast and then winning a technical decision after a head butt sent the bout to the scorecards early. Warren and Payano fought in mid-2015; Payano won a split decision. They had a rematch 10 months later, and this time it was Warren triumphing with a close majority decision.

The Future: Warren has been ordered to defend against Jamie McDonnell next. Look for that bout to take place sometime this fall in Europe.

76.

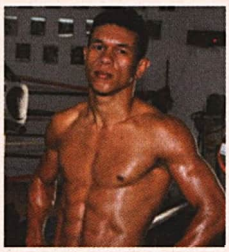
ARTUR BETERBIEV

The Rundown: Light heavyweight ★ Record: 10-0 (10 KOs) ★ Last year: 81 ▲

The Reasons: Beterbiev is a two-time Olympian whose lengthy amateur career had him ready to move quickly as a pro. Along the way, he took out two faded light heavyweights, Tavoris Cloud in two rounds in 2014 and Gabriel Campillo in four rounds in 2015. That put him one fight away from competing for a world title. But instead of facing Sullivan Barrera later that year, Beterbiev had to sit out with a shoulder injury. His layoff extended halfway into 2016, when he returned to make short work of Ezequiel Maderna. Beterbiev is still probably one of the better 175-pounders in what is a shallow division, but he will need to wait a little bit longer to face somebody at the top. Adonis Stevenson will probably face Eleider Alvarez next, while Sergey Kovalev has a November date with Andre Ward.

The Future: Beterbiev has a date of his own: Dec. 23 against Isidro Prieto, whom Alvarez outpointed last year.

77.



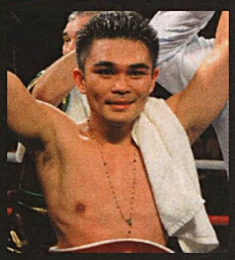
JUAN CARLOS PAYANO

The Rundown: Bantamweight ★ Record: 17-1 (8 KOs) ★ Last year: 46 ▼

The Reasons: Payano's world title win wasn't decisive and his title reign was brief, yet none of that disqualifies him from being considered a contender, if not a potential two-time beltholder. That's because of the way Payano beat Anselmo Moreno in 2014. He didn't just deprive Moreno of a chance to come back from a slow start but also kept him from proving that he would've been the winner anyway had a head butt not sent the bout to the scorecards after six. Payano's first defense came 10 months later, when he edged Rau'shee Warren by split decision. They met again another 10 months after that. This time, Warren got the nod in a narrow majority decision.

The Future: Payano wants a rubber match with Warren but will have to wait while Warren takes care of his mandatory obligations. Payano was looking to fight this past September but hadn't yet made his return.

78.



BRIAN VILORIA

The Rundown: Flyweight ★ Record: 36-5 (22 KOs) ★ Last year: 56 ▼

The Reasons: Viloria hasn't held a world title for more than 3½ years. He hasn't fought in a year. But he still deserves a spot based on the strength of whom he lost to and how he looked in those fights. Last year, Viloria gave a stiff challenge to Roman Gonzalez, who showed yet again why he is the best in the sport. That ended a four-fight win streak that followed Viloria's split-decision loss to Juan Francisco Estrada, another of boxing's best, back in 2013. Viloria was a unified flyweight titleholder going into the Estrada bout, his third title reign and the longest of them all. He had outpointed Julio Cesar Miranda for a belt at 112 in 2011, stopped Giovani Segura and Omar Nino Romero in defenses and took out Hernan Marquez for the additional title. His reigns at 108 were 2005-06 and 2009-10.

The Future: There's been no announcement. Viloria turns 36 in November.

79.

JULIAN WILLIAMS

The Rundown: Junior middleweight ★ Record: 22-0-1 (14 KOs) ★ Last year: 83 ▲

The Reasons: It's always a shame when a touted talent is on the verge of his big chance and instead is forced to wait. Williams has breezed through the kinds of measuring sticks that top prospects should look vastly superior against, knocking out seven of his last nine opponents, needing just half a round for Luciano Cuello in 2015 and seven rounds against Marcello Matano this past March. He's in position to challenge Jermall Charlo for a world title, but no deal had been announced as of press time, meaning seven months had passed since Williams last stepped into the ring. That's a drop in activity for a boxer who appeared three times in 2015 and four times in 2014. The wait aside, Williams had an easy route to the title shot. Many others have, yet he appears to have the goods and, unlike others, would be demonstrating that against a talented titleholder.

The Future: Charlo-Williams, if it happens, was still TBA.

80.

KNOCKOUT CP FRESHMART

The Rundown: Strawweight (WBA title) ★ Record: 13-0 (6 KOs) ★ Last year: unranked ▲

The Reasons: Freshmart quickly captured attention and not just because of his wonderful nom de guerre. In his ninth fight, in 2014, Freshmart outpointed the previously unbeaten Carlos Buitrago. Then came a unanimous decision over 43-year-old former titleholder Muhammad Rachman, a TKO of undefeated contender Alexis Diaz and another decision in a rematch with Buitrago. That led Freshmart to a shot at the WBA belt. At first, Freshmart seemed on course to challenge titleholder Hekkie Budler. But then Budler went off course and lost his belt to Byron Rojas. Instead, Freshmart beat the man who beat the man, outpointing Rojas this past June in a fight that was better off being read about than seen. Knockout now has more decision victories than knockouts, but don't expect him to change his name. Do expect him to try to continue to make a name for himself.

The Future: Freshmart's first defense hasn't been set.

81.

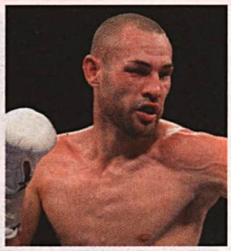
DAVID LEMIEUX

The Rundown: Middleweight ★ Record: 35-3 (32 KOs) ★ Last year: 65 ▼

The Reasons: Give Lemieux credit. He, unlike other name 160-pounders, was willing to put his title, body and future on the line by facing Gennady Golovkin. And give Lemieux credit for the fact that he was even in that position in the first place. Back in 2011, after all, he'd been shockingly stopped by Marco Antonio Rubio and then was outpointed by a past-his-prime Joachim Alcine. Lemieux then won nine straight, though, including stoppages of Fernando Guerrero and Gabriel Rosado, and a four-knockdown decision over Hassan N'Dam for a vacant title in mid-2015. He was fun to watch and available to fight. So Golovkin met him late last year and undid Lemieux with a jab, followed by power punches that broke Lemieux down for an eighth-round TKO. A comeback victory over Glen Tapia didn't show us anything new.

The Future: Neither will an Oct. 22 fight with Cristian Rios, which was made instead of a fan-friendly clash with Curtis Stevens. Lemieux could still pose a test for Canelo Alvarez next year.

82.



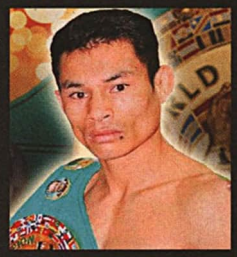
JOSE PEDRAZA

The Rundown: Junior lightweight (IBF title) ★ Record: 22-0 (12 KOs) ★ Last year: 67 ▼

The Reasons: Becoming the next Felix Trinidad isn't as simple as winning fights and being Puerto Rican. Style and charisma also are important ingredients. But even if you're not another Tito, it's potentially lucrative to be another P.R. star. There was a time when Jose Pedraza looked to be more promising than lightweight contender Felix Verdejo. He might still be, but Pedraza's not doing enough to help his own cause. He won a vacant belt in mid-2015 with a wide decision over Andrey Klimov, whose only other loss came to Terence Crawford. But his first defense was a questionable split decision over Edner Cherry. Pedraza looked much better this past April, knocking down and outpointing Stephen Smith.

The Future: But disagreements with his promoters have been the story with Pedraza since. There was talk of a fight with Yuriorkis Gamboa at 130, and Pedraza mentioned wanting Robert Easter Jr. at 135. There was no firm indication of where he goes next.

83.



WANHENG MENAYOTHIN

The Rundown: Strawweight (WBC title) ★ Record: 43-0 (17 KOs) ★ Last year: 99 ▲

The Reasons: Menayothin has fought seven times since winning his world title in late 2014, though not all of those were defenses of his belt. He, like some other Thai titleholders, stays busy with bouts against no-hopers. That's what the opening years of his career were like as Menayothin padded his record. He also mixed in fights that assisted his development while holding various minor trinkets to help ingratiate himself with the WBC. All of that put him in position to fight and stop Oswaldo Novoa for the belt he now holds. His five defenses since saw him give Jeffrey Galero his first loss; stop Jerry Tomogan, Young Gil Bae and Go Odaira; and win a decision over contender Saul Juarez this past August.

The Future: Menayothin had neither a date nor an opponent yet for his sixth defense.

84.

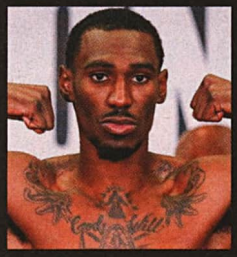
BYRON ROJAS

The Rundown: Strawweight. Record: 18-3-3 (8 KOs) ★ Last year: unranked ▲

The Reasons: Rojas was 3-0-3 after his first four months in boxing and 7-2-3 after his first dozen fights. Those draws and two split-decision losses weren't an indication of what was to come. That was especially true going into his bout this past March with Hekkie Budler, who until then was one of, if not the best 105-pounder in the world. Rojas was 17-2-3 at the time and was unproven, someone who had not yet stepped up to Budler's level. But on that night, Rojas was good enough to win a close unanimous decision. Budler said he had a bad night. Whatever the reason, Rojas got the win but didn't hold the title for long. Three months later, he lost a close but ugly decision to Knockout CP Freshmart. Rojas bounced back this past August, outpointing Omar Ortiz.

The Future: The next step for Rojas was not yet clear.

85.



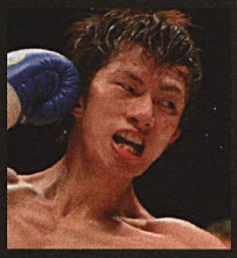
ROBERT EASTER JR.

The Rundown: Lightweight (IBF title) ★ Record: 18-0 (14 KOs) ★ Last year: unranked ▲

The Reasons: Adrien Broner has been touting his fellow Ohio fighter for some time. It wasn't just hype. The substance showed as Easter began to step up, first knocking out former 130-pound titleholder Argenis Mendez in five rounds this past April and then benefiting from a 135-pound title vacated by Rances Barthelemy. Easter didn't have a gimme opponent for that fight in September, though. He and unbeaten contender Richard Commey battled on even terms for 12 rounds. Easter's glove touched the canvas at one point, but he was able to triumph on the scorecards with a close split decision.

The Future: What's next for Easter is still to be determined. Commey wants a rematch and junior lightweight beltholder Jose Pedraza has also called Easter out.

86.



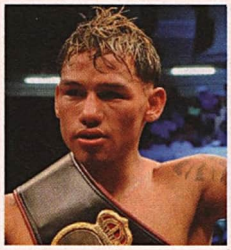
RYOICHI TAGUCHI

The Rundown: Junior flyweight (WBA title) ★ Record: 25-2-1 (11 KOs) ★ Last year: 100 ▲

The Reasons: Taguchi won nine straight before losing to Masayoshi Segawa in 2009. Then he went 9-0-1 for his next stretch, including a TKO of Yu Kimura in 2011; Kimura went on to briefly hold a title at 108. That led Taguchi into a collision with Naoya Inoue in what was Inoue's fourth pro fight. Inoue won by decision, which didn't reflect badly on Taguchi given how good Inoue has gone on to be. And since then, Taguchi has done quite well for himself, with seven straight victories and a world title. He defeated former 105-pound titleholder Florante Condes in 2014 and then picked up a belt by outpointing Alberto Rossel. Taguchi's first three defenses were stoppage wins over former 105-pound titleholder Kwanthai Sithmorseng, Luis de la Rosa and contender Juan Jose Landaeta. This past August, he was taken the distance by another former strawweight beltholder, Ryo Miyazaki.

The Future: Taguchi's fifth defense may come Dec. 31.

87.



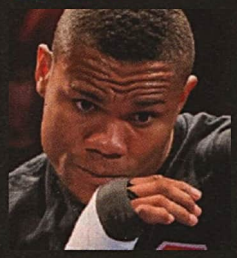
LUIS CONCEPCION

The Rundown: Junior bantamweight (WBA title) ★ Record: 35-4 (24 KOs) ★ Last year: unranked ▲

The Reasons: Concepcion was a flywight contender who had a very brief stint as a titleholder, ditching his interim belt for a legitimate one after Daiki Kameda abdicated in early 2011. But then Concepcion traded knockdowns with Hernan Marquez in a Fight of the Year candidate and succumbed in the 11th round. The rematch in October 2011 went much worse; Concepcion was down three times and done in less than two minutes. He put together nine wins afterward, a streak broken with an unsuccessful challenge for Carlos Cuadras' title at 115 in 2015. Undeterred, he campaigned for another title shot, stopping David Sanchez and shutting out a deteriorated version of Marquez in their rubber match before taking Kohei Kono's belt this past August.

The Future: His first defense will come Nov. 26, when he faces Khalid Yafai in the U.K.

88.



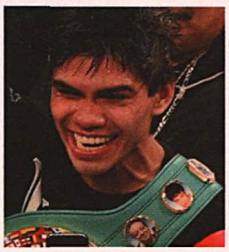
ELEIDER ALVAREZ

The Rundown: Light heavyweight ★ Record: 20-0 (10 KOs) ★ Last year: unranked ▲

The Reasons: Alvarez doesn't get the same kind of buzz as Adonis Stevenson and Artur Beterbiev, two of the other 175-pounders who found a second home in Montreal and signed with Al Haymon. He, like Beterbiev, has positioned himself as a contender in a division sorely lacking in depth. Alvarez fought for Colombia in the 2008 Olympics and lost to an eventual bronze medalist. All but two of his bouts have been in Quebec. He was the first to beat Ryno Liebenberg in 2014, made properly quick work of Anatoliy Dudchenko next, outpointed Isidro Prieto — whom Beterbiev will soon face — and then took a majority decision over Isaac Chilemba late last year. He has only fought once so far in 2016, appearing underneath Stevenson on a July card. Alvarez was originally supposed to face former champ Chad Dawson, but Dawson pulled out and Alvarez won a decision over Robert Berridge instead.

The Future: Alvarez is Stevenson's mandatory and is expected to face him next.

89.



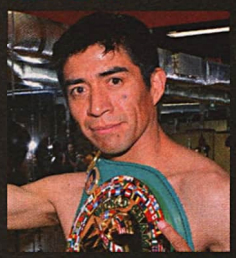
PEDRO GUEVARA

The Rundown: Junior flyweight ★ Record: 28-2-1 (17 KOs) ★ Last year: 73 ▼

The Reasons: Guevara's first loss was a sign he belonged, as he dropped a close split decision to titleholder Johnriel Casimero in 2012. Next came decision victories over former 105-pound titleholders Raul Garcia and Mario Rodriguez in 2013. By the end of 2014, he had knocked out Akira Yaegashi for a vacant title at 108. The junior flyweight division goes in circles, however. Guevara's second defense was a decision over Ganigan Lopez. His third was a split-decision loss to Yu Kimura in late 2015. Since then, Kimura has lost the title to Lopez while Yaegashi went on to take a belt from Javier Mendoza. Two men Guevara beat have titles while he doesn't, at least for now. Guevara picked up two victories at flyweight since then but otherwise was competing at 108.

The Future: We know that because Guevara was supposed to challenge Lopez in an Oct. 15 rematch, but Lopez was injured. Guevara was set to face Jerry Tomogdan instead.

90.



GANIGAN LOPEZ

The Rundown: Junior flyweight (WBC title) ★ Record: 28-6 (17 KOs) ★ Last year: unranked ▲

The Reasons: Lopez kept going after early defeats — two in his first eight fights — and became emboldened even as he lost more fights on occasion. That's because a 2009 loss to Jose Zuniga was to a future contender while a 2010 loss to Adrian Hernandez was to a future titleholder. Both were split decisions. Lopez knocked Zuniga out in their immediate rematch. Then, after getting stopped himself by Denver Cuello in 2012, Lopez moved up from 105 to 108. He outpointed former 105-pound titleholder Mario Rodriguez in early 2014 and then dropped a decision to 108-pound titleholder Pedro Guevara in 2015. But Guevara went on to lose to Yu Kimura, and Lopez was able to beat Kimura by majority decision this past March. He successfully defended it in July, outpointing Jonathan Taconing.

The Future: Lopez pulled out of an October rematch with Guevara because of an injury.

91.

AKIRA YAEGASHI

The Rundown: Junior flyweight (IBF title) ★ Record: 24-5 (12 KOs) ★ Last year: unranked ▲

The Reasons: Yaegashi is back in the RING 100 after a year's absence. He's now a three-division titleholder, a status that seemed uncertain after he dropped down to 108 pounds following a defeat at 112. Yaegashi started at 105. After two losses, he went on a win streak that culminated in a fantastic war with Pornsawan Porpramook in 2011. Yaegashi got the TKO and a title. He lost in his first defense, though, dropping a decision to Kazuto Ioka. That sent Yaegashi to flyweight, where he outpointed Toshiyuki Igarashi to become RING champ in 2013. He won three defenses before getting stopped by the great Roman Gonzalez in 2014. The loss sent him down to 108, where he got KO'd by titleholder Pedro Guevara. A year later, Yaegashi outpointed Javier Mendoza to wrap up 2015 with a title victory. He defended that belt in May, defeating Martin Tecuapetla by a split decision.

The Future: Yaegashi will owe a fight to the winner of Fahlan Sakkreerin Jr. vs. Milan Melindo.

92.

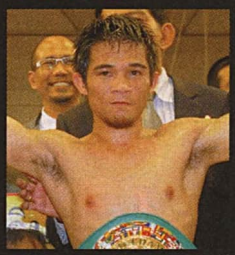
TONY BELLEW

The Rundown: Cruiserweight (WBC title) ★ Record: 27-2-1 (17 KOs) ★ Last year: unranked ▲

The Reasons: It's been three years since Bellew was sent packing from the light heavyweight division. He's found a comfortable spot at 200, though. The move felt necessary after Adonis Stevenson stopped Bellew in six in late 2013. He has won seven straight since, including a victory over faded former contender Valery Brudov, a split decision over Nathan Cleverly to avenge Bellew's majority-decision loss at 175 back in 2011, a decision over Mateusz Masternak and a third-round TKO of Ilunga Makabu this past May. Bellew went down in the first round of that fight but wasn't badly hurt. In the third, he wobbled Makabu and then poured on the power shots until Makabu was finished. It was a good victory over a foe who hadn't lost since his first fight and was coming off a victory in a brutal war with Thabiso Mchunu in 2015.

The Future: Bellew's first defense was scheduled for Oct. 15, after we went to press, against B.J. Flores.

93.



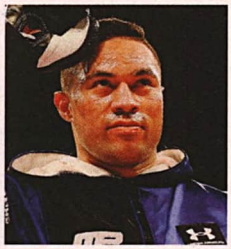
SRISAKET SOR RUNGVISAI

The Rundown: Junior bantamweight ★ Record: 41-4-1 (38 KOs) ★ Last year: 98 ▲

The Reasons: Sor Rungvisai lost his world title to Carlos Cuadras in 2014 but that defeat doesn't look so bad given what Cuadras went on to do. It also helps Sor Rungvisai's cause just how he lost. Cuadras had been cut by a head butt. Sor Rungvisai was down on the scorecards but within reach when the fight was sent to a technical decision after eight. That ended an otherwise brief reign that began a year before with a TKO of Yota Sato. Since then, Sor Rungvisai has won 14 straight. Some Thai fighters love to stay busy against lesser opponents; the only foe of consequence in that stretch was contender Jose Salgado, whom Sor Rungvisai stopped in four. Sor Rungvisai's three other losses came in his first five fights, including a debut defeat to future three-division titleholder Akira Yaegashi.

The Future: Sor Rungvisai is mandatory to Roman Gonzalez, who beat Cuadras. It's uncertain if and when that happens.

94.



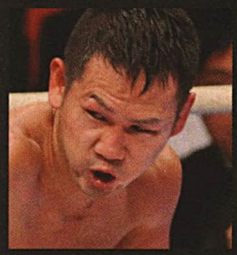
JOSEPH PARKER

The Rundown: Heavyweight ★ Record: 21-0 (18 KOs) ★ Last year: unranked ▲

The Reasons: While plenty of attention has gone to big men like Tyson Fury, Anthony Joshua, Wladimir Klitschko and Deontay Wilder, there are a couple of heavyweights coming up who show promise. We mentioned Luis Ortiz elsewhere. Joseph Parker is another. The New Zealander has thankfully moved beyond making short work of designated fall guys like Bowie Tupou and an old Kali Meehan. This year has brought four victories, including a decision over Carlos Takam (who was knocked out by Alexander Povetkin in 2014) and a KO of Alexander Dimitrenko (who was put away by Kubrat Pulev back in 2012). He has been biding his time and improving a bit more before he tries to cash in on his lofty positions in the sanctioning body rankings, which could land him a fight with Joshua.

The Future: Parker might face Andy Ruiz before the year is out, but he was also keeping an eye out on whether Joshua and Klitschko could reach a deal.

95.



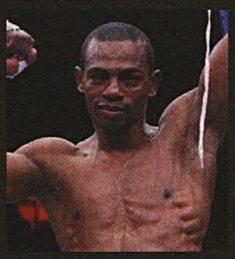
KATSUNARI TAKAYAMA

The Rundown: Strawweight (WBO title) ★ Record: 31-8 (12 KOs) ★ Last year: 78 ▼

The Reasons: Takayama is persistent because he's consistently capable of fighting near (but not quite at) the top of the 105-pound division. It's been that way for more than 11 years now. Over that period, he has held a world title on four occasions: briefly in 2005, again from 2013 to 2014, for exactly one year from 2014 to 2015 and then once more with a technical decision over Riku Kano in August that earned him a vacant belt. Surprisingly, he's only 33. Takayama has beaten the likes of Isaac Bustos, Mario Rodriguez and Fahlan Sakkreerin Jr. Most of his defeats have been against recognizable names such as Eagle Kyowa, Yutaka Niida, Roman Gonzalez, Nkosinathi Joyi, Francisco Rodriguez Jr. and Jose Argumedo. He is 8-6 in world title fights, including 4-3 in title defenses.

The Future: Takayama's first defense of this belt — and the eighth of his career — hasn't been set.

96.



JONATHAN **GUZMAN**

The Rundown: Junior featherweight (IBF title) ★ Record: 22-0 (22 KOs) ★ Last year: unranked ▲

The Reasons: Given Guzman's gaudy knockout streak, there was a question of whether Shingo Wake could remain awake when they met this past July. Guzman clearly got the better of the battle, putting Wake down four times and and raising so much grotesque swelling on Wake's face that the referee rightly stopped the bout in the 11th. That earned Guzman a vacant world title. It was the longest an opponent had ever lasted against Guzman, which makes sense when you look at how it was only recently that he began to face fighters with a pulse. Aside from one foe who lasted six in 2012, Guzman has had to go deeper in fights since 2015. He stopped Juan Guzman and Christian Esquivel in five, put Danny Aquino away in nine, finished Daniel Rosas in eight and got a glimpse of the championship rounds against Wake.

The Future: Guzman is scheduled to defend on Dec. 31 against Yukinori Oguni, whose only loss came via TKO to Wake in 2013.

97.

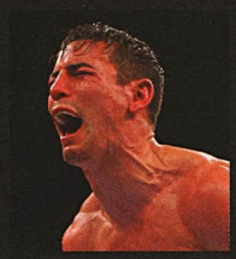
HOZUMI **HASEGAWA**

The Rundown: Junior featherweight (WBC title) ★ Record: 36-5 (16 KOs) ★ Last year: unranked ▲

The Reasons: Hasegawa is a blast from the past, a longtime bantamweight titleholder during the previous decade. Hasegawa won a belt in 2005 and defended it with 10 victories, including a decision over Simpiwe Vetyeka (who went on to dethrone Chris John at 126 many years later) and a first-round TKO of Vusi Malinga (who took a young Leo Santa Cruz 12 rounds later on). The end came when Fernando Montiel stopped Hasegawa in four in 2010. So Hasegawa jumped up two divisions to outpoint previously unbeaten Juan Carlos Burgos for a vacant belt at 126, only to promptly lose it to Jhonny Gonzalez by TKO in 2011. Hasegawa suffered another stoppage loss three years later, against titleholder Kiko Martinez. But after taking a year off, Hasegawa returned in 2015 with two decision victories and then challenged Hugo Ruiz for a title at 122 this past September. Hasegawa, nearly 37, won when Ruiz stayed in his corner after the ninth round.

The Future: Hasegawa's first defense of his third reign wasn't set.

98.



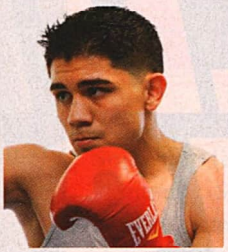
ANTHONY **CROLLA**

The Rundown: Lightweight ★ Record: 31-5-3 (13 KOs) ★ Last year: unranked ▲

The Reasons: It's amazing that Crolla is even here. Not just in the RING 100, but in the ring at all. Crolla was coming off victories over Gavin Rees, Stephen Foster and John Murray and was nearing a title shot when he suffered a head injury and other wounds after confronting burglars in late 2014. He recovered and returned, only to come up short in a draw with WBA titleholder Darleys Perez in mid-2015. Crolla won their rematch with a body shot in the fifth round and used another body shot to end his first defense, a bout with Ismael Barroso this past May in which Barroso was ahead on the cards after six. Alas, Crolla's second defense came against a much better lightweight. Jorge Linares outpointed him in Manchester in September to take the title away.

The Future: Crolla probably won't have to wait long for another chance. He and Linares will likely meet again next.

99.



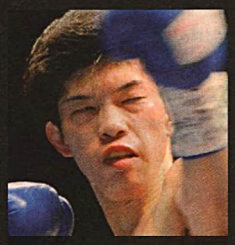
JOSEPH **DIAZ JR.**

The Rundown: Featherweight ★ Record: 22-0 (13 KOs) ★ Last year: unranked ▲

The Reasons: Diaz, a 2012 Olympian who competed at bantamweight, lost to an eventual bronze medalist and then turned pro at junior featherweight, which has a limit lighter than Diaz's amateur weight. But as he grew a little older, he grew into a featherweight, which is where he has competed since 2015. His biggest win that year was a decision over the gritty Rene Alvarado. Diaz also outpointed Ruben Tamayo and made quick work of Hugo Partida. He began 2016 by outpointing former contender Jayson Velez, then stopped Victor Proa in two and defeated Andrew Cancio on the Liam Smith-Canelo Alvarez undercard. Golden Boy, which has promoted Diaz for his entire career, believes Diaz is nearing a title shot. He hasn't yet competed near that level of opposition, so a couple more good tests should come first.

The Future: There was a possibility that Diaz could appear underneath Takashi Miura vs. Orlando Salido on Dec. 17.

100.



KOSEI **TANAKA**

The Rundown: Junior flyweight ★ Record: 7-0 (4 KOs) ★ Last year: 93 ▼

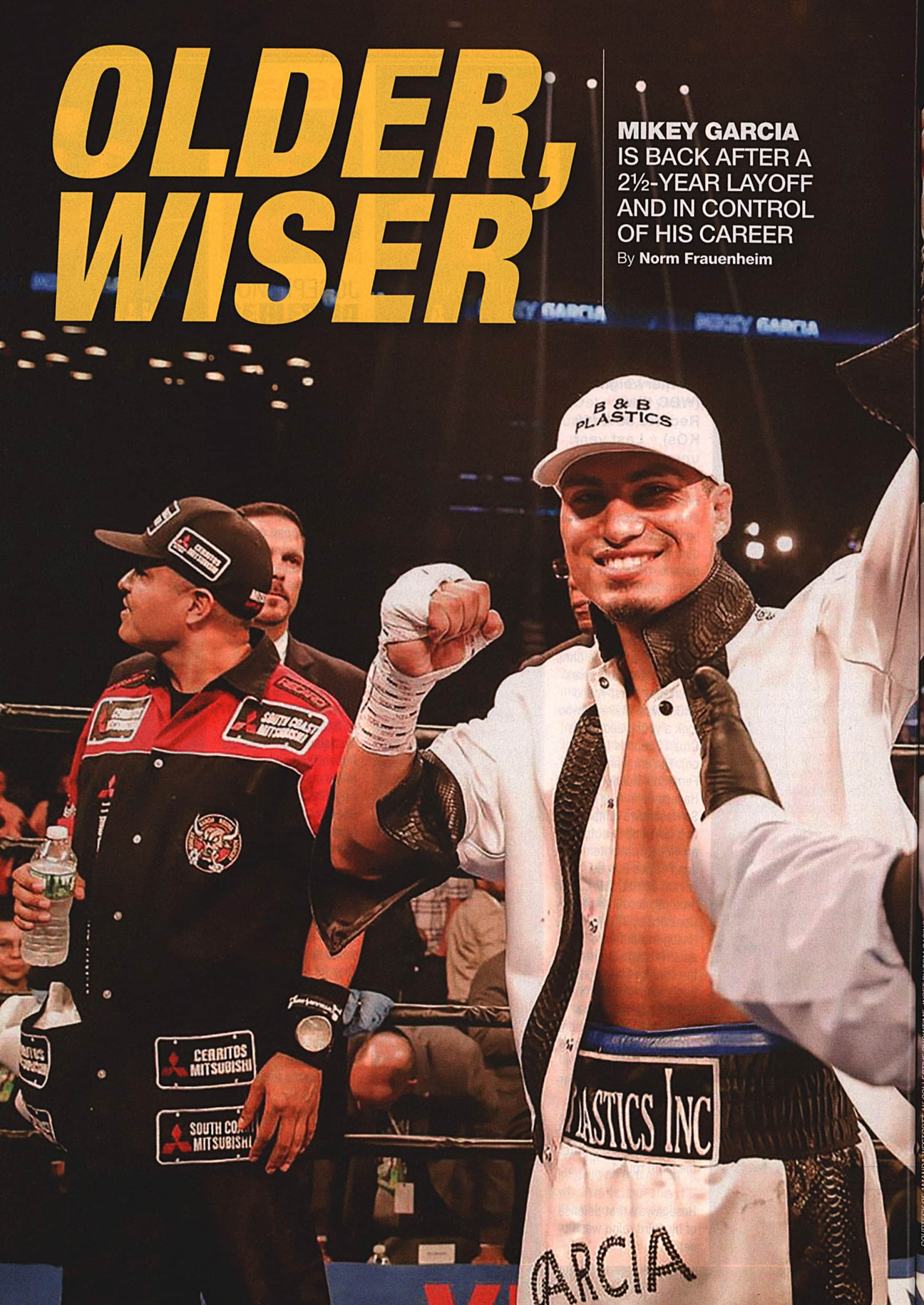
The Reasons: Tanaka came out of the gate quite quickly, only to see his career slow this year. He was just 3-0 when he took on fellow unbeaten prospect Ryuji Hara, who was 18-0 at the time. Tanaka stopped him in 10 rounds. Then, just weeks away from his 20th birthday and still just four fights into his career, Tanaka fought Julian Yedras for a vacant world title in May 2015 and won by unanimous decision. He defended it at the end of last year, knocking out Vic Saludar in six rounds. But then he had to depart the division, unable to make 105 anymore. Tanaka announced a move to 108 but actually fought slightly above 110 pounds for his fight this past May with Rene Patilano, who also was taken out in six. Tanaka is still just 21. He's in the rankings at junior flyweight. He has time to get back on the fast track.

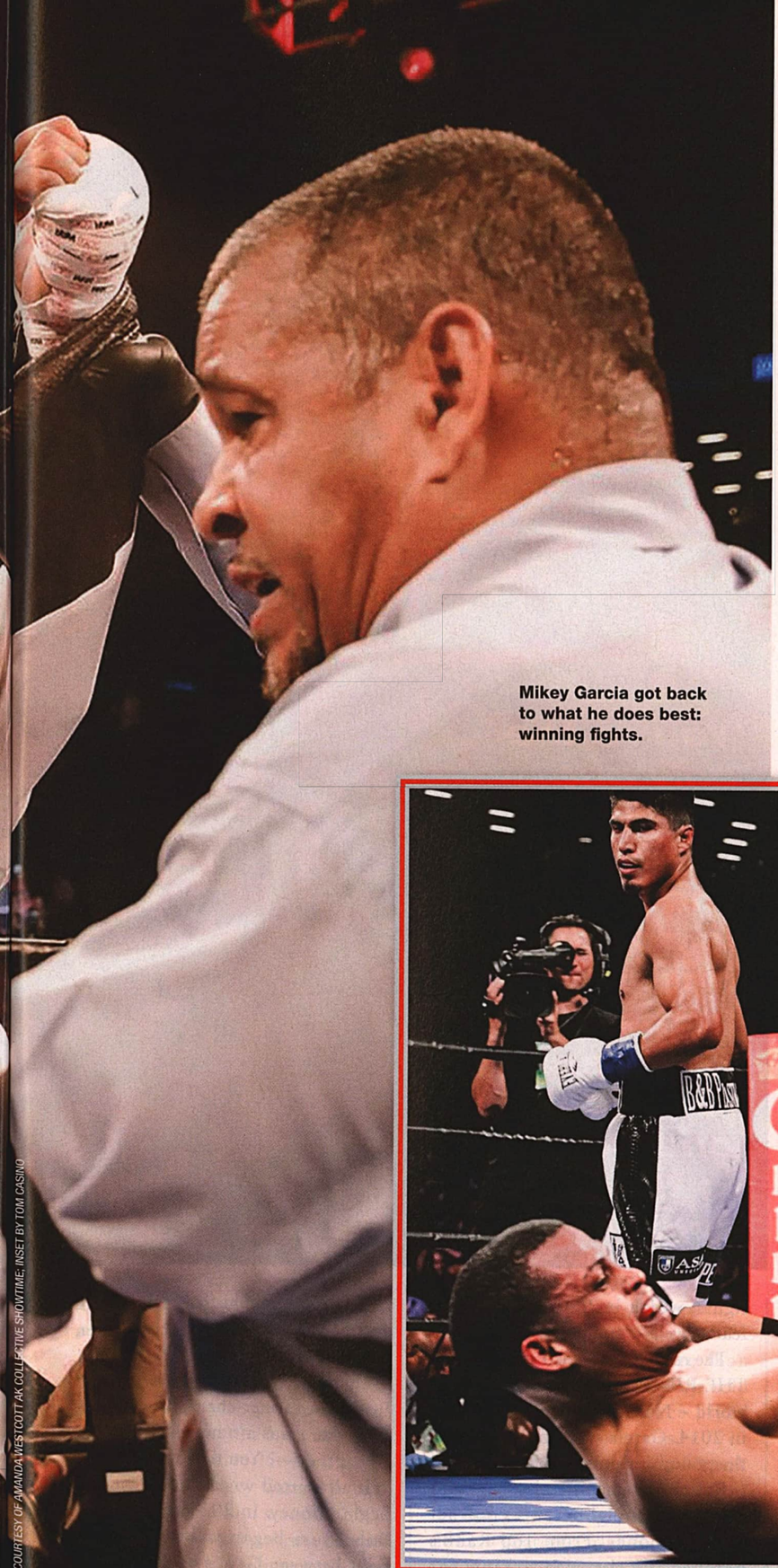
The Future: Tanaka was sidelined by a hand injury. His next appearance hadn't been announced.

OLDER, WISER

MIKEY GARCIA IS BACK AFTER A 2½-YEAR LAYOFF AND IN CONTROL OF HIS CAREER

By **Norm Frauenheim**



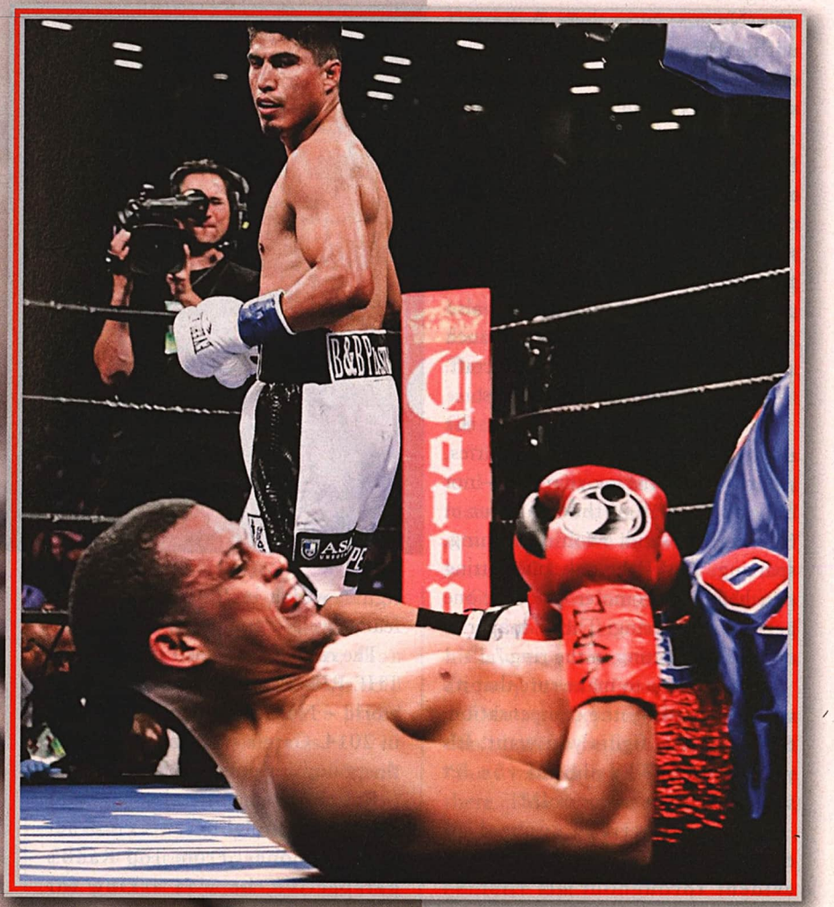


Mikey Garcia got back to what he does best: winning fights.

COURTESY OF AMANDA WESTCOTT AK COLLECTIVE SHOWTIME; INSET BY TOM CASINO

It's an old business full of as many categories as there are championship belts. There are emerging fighters and forgotten fighters. Some are legends. Some are shot. Some not. Some are rich. Some are broke. Some are inducted. Some indicted. Sometimes, enshrinement and indictment happen almost simultaneously to one battered face that appears on a wall in a Hall and in a booking photo. Pick the appropriate stereotype and make sure it fits, scars and all.

A long history also includes the inevitable exception – the fighter who rebels against categories, promoters and old assumptions in a stubborn battle often as fierce and challenging as anything ever faced in the ring. A couple of decades ago, that fighter was Bernard Hopkins. Today, there's Mikey Garcia. »



Garcia is back, having resumed his career on July 30 with a victory over Elio Rojas in his first fight after a protracted legal battle that ended when Top Rank announced on April 6 that it had cut him loose from a 5-year contract extension he had signed in 2009. Then he was called a free agent.

But free to do what? Unlike a quarterback or NBA playmaker or power-hitting shortstop, free agency guarantees only freedom from more stitches for a boxer still unbeaten and still in his prime.

Prizefighters, more than anybody in today's play-for-pay professions, are independent entrepreneurs. They have real skin in the game. Eyes and brain cells, too. The risk is immense and the chance at making money is limited by what their skin can endure from the damage one punch can do within an infinitesimal fraction of time. No guarantees there. A contract with a proven promotional entity might be the only way to ensure some money in a pursuit as risky as any.

But Garcia decided to take on Top Rank, perhaps because he realized that there is no bigger risk than your own skin. At every opening bell, you're betting it all. From Garcia's perspective, it was a decision he made perhaps because of his pride but also because he wanted to know as much as he could about his dangerous craft.

No regrets about that, he says.

"You're the one getting in the ring, you're the one risking injuries, you're the one risking your life — not only on the day of the fight, but in training," he said. "You're training, sparring. You're the only one getting punched. The promoter is not the one getting in the ring. The manager is not the one getting in the ring."

"... You have to make sure that it's worth the risk — the compensation, the terms, the fights you want. It's your career. Why should you let someone else be in control?"

Garcia's tactical control of everything between the ropes was evident throughout his first 34 fights, which included two titles – featherweight and junior lightweight.

The run also included spots among THE RING's Top 20 fighters in the world – No. 15 in 2013 and No. 17 in 2014. Garcia was poised to enter the pound-for-pound debate.

But that's when he also began to ask questions about his contract and the money. From Top Rank's perspective, he was asking for trouble. Not even his father, Eduardo, and brother Robert, his co-trainer, were too sure.

"Now we admire his decision," said Robert, a former champion himself. "But there was a time when we said, 'What the f---? You're stupid.'"

It all started where most disputes begin: money. In 2014, Top Rank's Bob Arum began talking about a fight between Garcia and Yuriorkis Gamboa for a vacant lightweight title in May at The Forum in Inglewood, California.

According to media reports at the time, Gamboa's promoter, then-rapper 50 Cent, had agreed to a $1.5 million purse for his fighter. According to Mikey Garcia, Arum's opening offer to him was $850,000. After some wrangling, Arum bumped the offer up to $1 million, but Garcia argued that he deserved as much as Gamboa and the fight was off.

"I think I'm worth more than Gamboa at this point," Garcia told reporters at the time when asked about the futile negotiations.

For the Garcia-Top Rank relationship, it was the beginning of the end. Garcia fought three times in 2013 – beating Orlando Salido for the WBO's 126-pound title and then Juan Manuel Lopez before jumping to 130 pounds to take the WBO title from Roman Martinez. Then in January 2014 he defended the 130-pound belt with a victory over Juan Carlos Burgos.

He wouldn't fight again for 2½ years.

"A lot longer than I anticipated," Garcia said.

Garcia discovered that he and Top Rank were a lot further apart than even he knew despite speculation that he was being groomed as a potential foe for Manny Pacquiao. There was even talk of him challenging Terence Crawford, then still a 135-pound titleholder.

Garcia asked for $2 million against Crawford. Forget about it, Arum said. In April 2014, Garcia filed suit against Top Rank in Riverside County (California) Superior Court. In the process of preparing the legal action, the student in Garcia got interested.

In 2010, Garcia got a degree in police work from a course he took at Ventura County (California) Police and Sheriff Reserves Academy. He knew something about enforcement. He was about to learn about process. The legal footwork was an eye-opener, said Garcia, who has relied on his feet for a perfect record in the ring.

"Through the discovery process and all of that other paperwork, I learned a lot about boxing, stuff I would never have known otherwise," he said.

Garcia got so interested that he was a regular at the Los Angeles offices of his lawyer, entertainment and sports attorney Bryan J. Freedman.

"My attorneys told me, 'No, you don't have to be here,'" Garcia said. "But I wanted to be there. I had to be there. This was about me. At times, I was there at least once a week, reviewing documents for accuracy. Stuff like that."

'You're the only one getting punched. The promoter is not the one getting in the ring. The manager is not the one getting in the ring.'
– Mikey Garcia

Garcia was out of the public eye for almost three years.

One discovery was a clause that gave Top Rank the right to extend his contract for the first five defenses of any major title. He had already defended the WBO's 130-pound crown against Burgos. That meant four more. Without a belt, however, there could be no defenses. In October 2014, he vacated the crown.

"I wasn't fighting for a world title," he said of the maneuver. "I wasn't even a world champion."

The judge agreed, indicating that he would rule in favor of Garcia a couple of weeks before Top Rank ended the process by announcing the release.

"From what the judge had told us, we knew it was coming," Garcia said. "If it hadn't happened then, it would have happened in August. That's when the contract was up anyway."

Arum decided to be proactive.

"The contract was running out," the promoter said. "We argued that the contract was good. But what was the point of running up legal fees? It was a few months. Enough is enough.

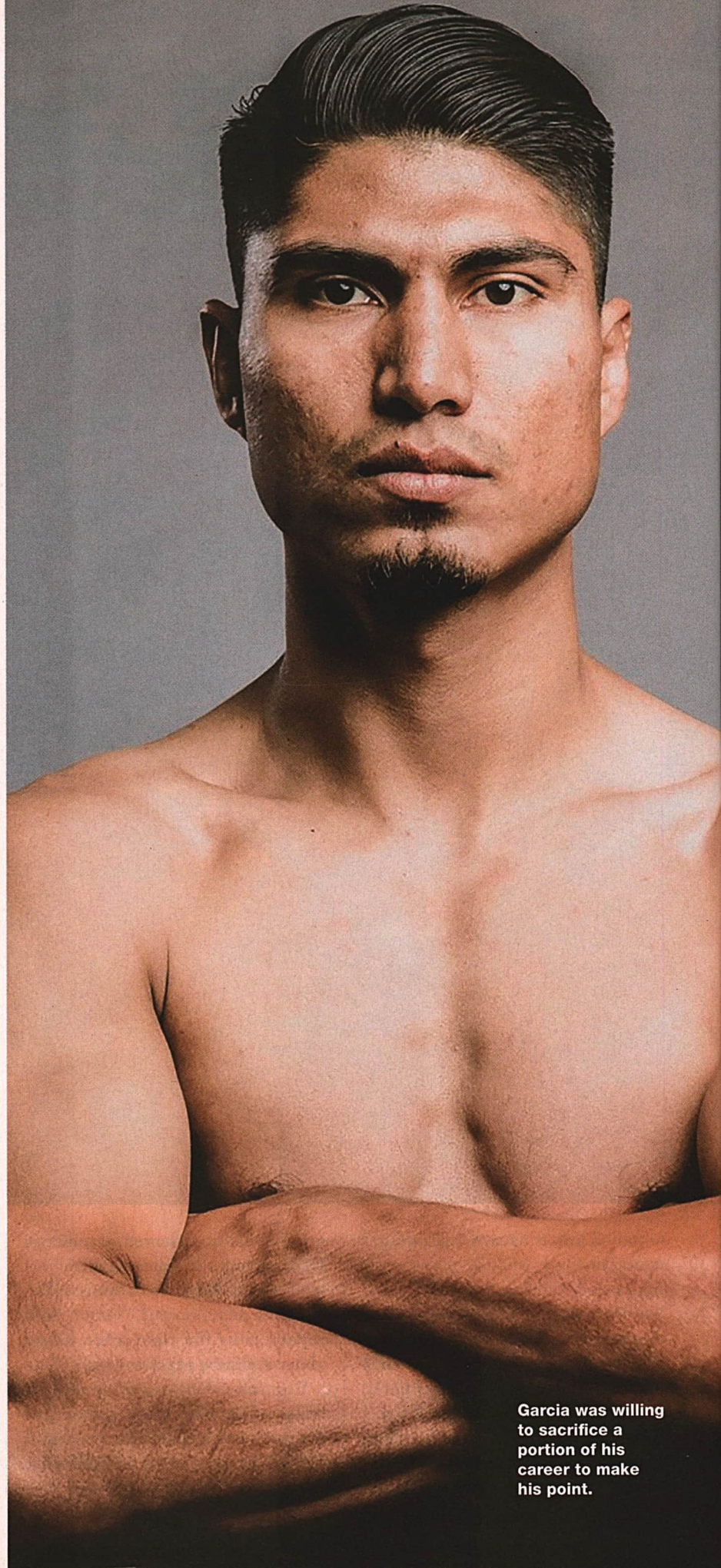
"I think we proved our point. We had stood up for our rights so that he was unable to break the contract and leave us. It took him over two years."

What remains unanswered is the overall impact Garcia's absence had on the sport. It's no secret that boxing is encountering tough times. The slide has been blamed by some on the disappointing Floyd Mayweather Jr.-Pacquiao fight in May 2015. Pay-per-view numbers and purses have crashed since Mayweather-Pacquiao delivered a dud after five years of hype.

What's lost in placing blame on Mayweather-Pacquiao, however, is the absence of Garcia for 34 months and Andre Ward for nearly 20 months.

Ward was idle all of 2014 because of a legal feud with his late promoter, Dan Goossen. He was back with a victory against Paul Smith in June 2015 in the first step toward his much anticipated bout with Sergey Kovalev on Nov. 19.

Ward, also unbeaten, was near the top of pound-for-pound lists. Like Garcia, he was a star in waiting,



Garcia was willing to sacrifice a portion of his career to make his point.

COMEBACKS

Many prominent, relatively fresh fighters have returned from extended hiatuses and had success. Here is a look at six of them:

MUHAMMAD ALI

Out of boxing: 3 years, 7 months (1967-70) • **Upon return:** Won the heavyweight championship twice.

GEORGE FOREMAN

Out of boxing: 10 years (1977-87) • **Upon return:** Regained the heavyweight title at 45.

SUGAR RAY LEONARD

Out of boxing: 2 years, 11 months (1984-87) • **Upon return:** Stunned Marvin Hagler to win middleweight title.

MIKE TYSON

Out of boxing: 4 years, 2 months (1991-95) • **Upon return:** Regained the heavyweight title before declining.

VITALI KLITSCHKO

Out of boxing: 3 years, 10 months (2004-08) • **Upon return:** Regained a heavyweight title and retired as champ.

FLOYD MAYWEATHER JR.

Out of boxing: 1 year, 9 months (2007-09) • **Upon return:** Immediately regained his status as the No. 1 boxer.

ready to fill the post Mayweather-Pacquiao void. But neither of them was there yet. Could they have been enough of an attraction to keep some fans from giving up the sport? Hard to say. But some answers might be forthcoming in Kovalev-Ward and in whatever Garcia does next.

Garcia's future appears to be promising but it was more uncertain in late and early fall than Ward's was. There had been talk of Garcia signing with a promoter. He had been in talks with Mayweather Promotions. There had been discussions with Richard Schaefer, Oscar De La Hoya's ex-CEO at Golden Boy. Schaefer has launched his own company, Ringstar Sports.

Schaefer was at ringside for Garcia's four-knockdown, fifth-round knockout of Rojas at Barclays Center in Brooklyn. It sounded then as if Schaefer wanted Garcia as his star client. Schaefer talked about making his promotional debut on Oct. 15 at Staples Center in downtown Los Angeles. The assumption, however, was that the card would only happen if it had Garcia in the main event.

In mid-September, however, Schaefer pulled the plug, saying there was too much competition for television time from college football and Major League Baseball's playoffs. He never mentioned Garcia, who in the immediate aftermath of his victory over Rojas said he wanted to fast-track his comeback with a challenging fight against Dejan Zlaticanin, unbeaten and THE RING's No. 1-rated lightweight behind champion Jorge Linares.

"I don't feel the need to take it slow with three tune-up fights," he said. "No, no, no. I'm ready."

It is assumed Garcia still has a relationship with Al Haymon of Premier Boxing Champions. His comeback in July was a prelim to Carl Frampton's upset of Leo Santa Cruz on a PBC card.

In a July 2014 deposition, Garcia disclosed that he had signed a managerial agreement with Haymon, a longtime adviser to Mayweather. Schaefer also is believed to have signed several Golden Boy fighters to agreements with Haymon while he was still working for De La Hoya.

A promotional deal with either Mayweather or Schaefer would presumably include Haymon's PBC. But even that appeared uncertain in late September. PBC had been busy with one card after another on at least eight different networks but had one show scheduled for the rest of 2016, on Sept. 27 in Santa Fe, New Mexico.

Could Garcia be forced to wait some more? Maybe. But in late summer he talked as though he values his newfound freedom, or at least independence. For now, he said, he'd be willing to fight for different promoters on a trial basis.

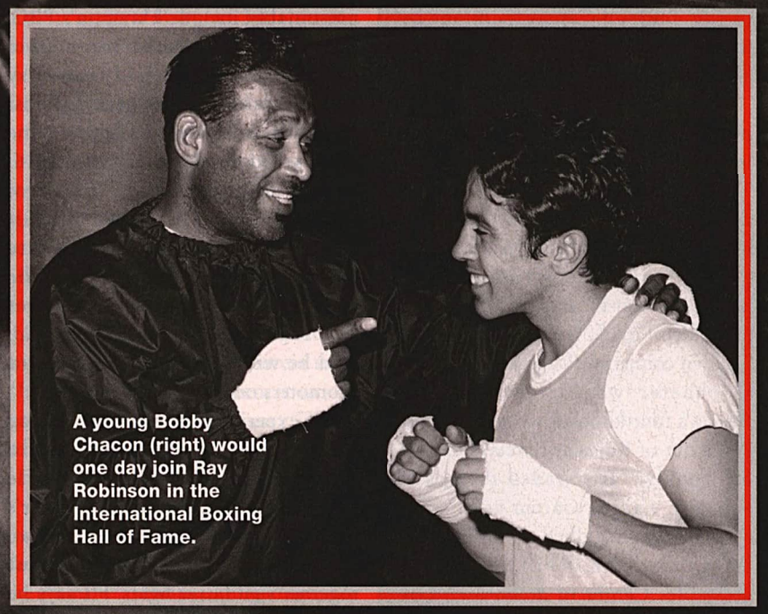
His experience in regard to the Top Rank lawsuit, he said, taught him to be careful, diligent and skeptical. He said he wants to know a promoter's relationship with the television networks and their ability to put together significant fights. He says he knows now how to read and question the fine print. He has developed a keen eye for the devil in the details.

"Fighters go about their careers and just do what the promoters say," Garcia said. "If they're getting paid enough and they're happy, that's fine. But if you start investigating, start asking questions, you find out that there's more they're hiding, that there are numbers they're trying to hide. But if you don't ask, you'll never know.

"A fighter who I think knows is Floyd. Obviously he won. De La Hoya was one of them. He's promoting, so he knows. He probably learned it after he went through kind of the same thing that I did with Top Rank. Miguel Cotto, too. I'm sure he learned. He went through it. And he got smart.

"Maybe, if you want, you could consider myself as one who wanted to learn a little more. But the other 90 percent of the fighters probably don't know all that much. Hey, I still don't know everything. I'm not a promoter. I'm not in the promotional business. But I do know a lot more now than when I got into all of this." RING

BOBBY CHACON: 1951-2016



A young Bobby Chacon (right) would one day join Ray Robinson in the International Boxing Hall of Fame.

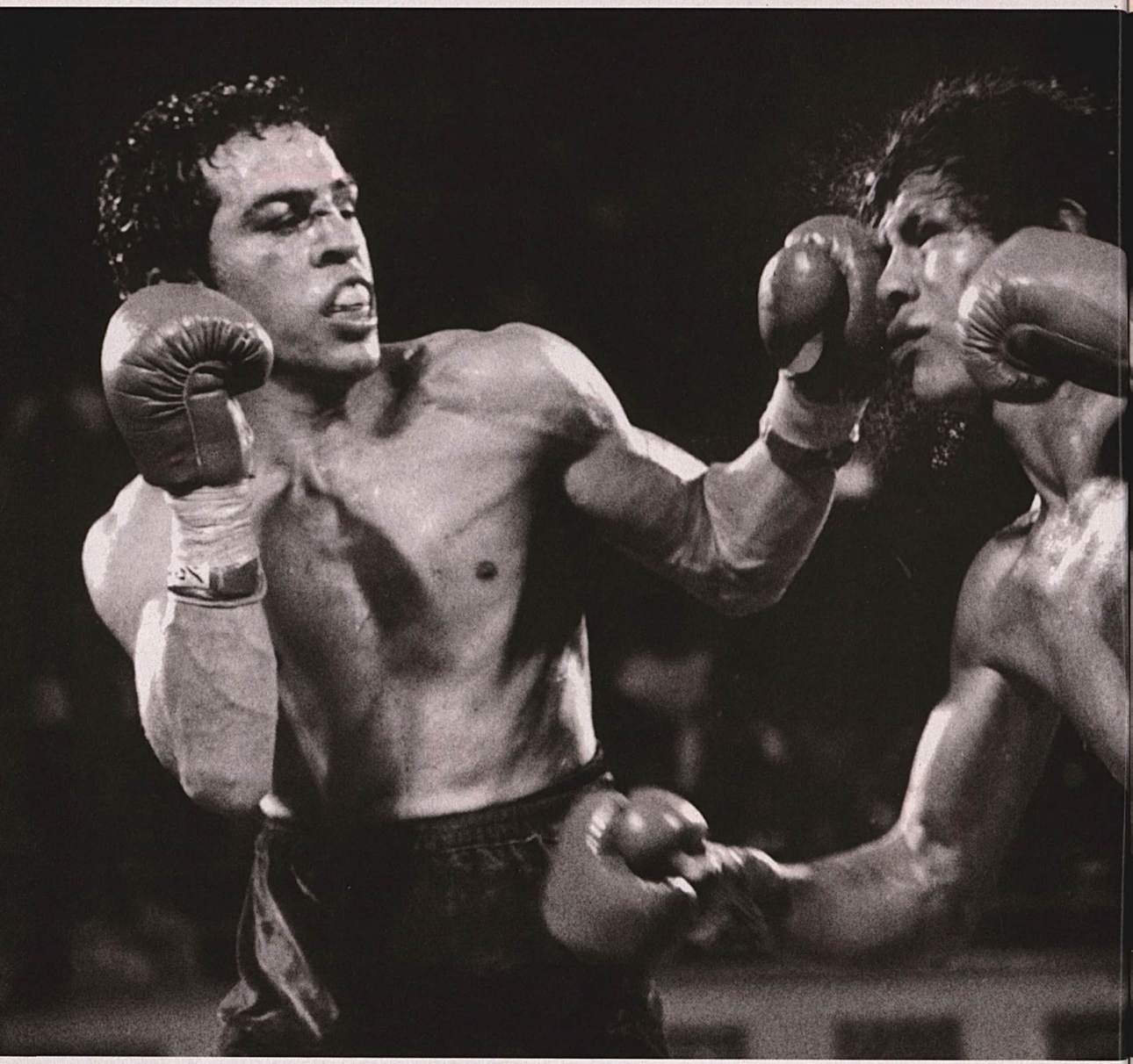
EVERYBODY LOVED BOBBY CHACON

LIFE WAS A FIGHT FOR **'SCHOOLBOY'** – IN AND OUT OF THE RING – BUT HE NEVER STOPPED SMILING

By **Don Stradley**

The news didn't explode. It came quietly. In fact, it was barely a blip outside of Los Angeles. There were a handful of comments on social media, but you kept hoping there'd be more. Sure, football season was starting, and there was yet another UFC show that weekend, one where a professional wrestler got his comeuppance for daring to enter the cage, but it seemed the generation overloaded on celebrity gossip and junk news couldn't spare a moment for the death of Bobby Chacon.

And because he'd been a boxer, there wasn't much to do besides the usual routine of recalling the wins and losses. If you'd been there during the 1970s and '80s, you knew he'd been a shining ornament of a particular time and place, what many consider a golden era. You may remember the excitement, the blood, the lightning right hand. You may have spent a few Saturday afternoons in front of your television, marveling at his determination in the ring. The important bouts were set for 15 rounds back then, and Chacon guaranteed bell-to-bell action. Then again, you recently went through the death of Muhammad Ali and may have been wrung out. You saw the



When Bobby Chacon died, something intangible went out the door with him, something that can't be replaced.

endless Ali tributes, with CNN giving 'round-the-clock coverage to anyone even remotely linked to Ali. You knew it wouldn't be that way for Bobby Chacon, so you moved on.

Chacon died while under hospice care in Lake Elsinore, California. It was a simple, unglamorous death; he fell in his room and bumped his head. He died soon after, with loved ones at his bedside. Maybe they held his hand, or spoke to him soothingly. Did he know what was happening? Probably not; he'd been struggling with brain damage for many years. Clips of him in recent times show a grown man reduced to a kind of infancy. When the story leaked out of L.A., a few news outlets picked up the routine: stale recaps of his career, his stormy personal life, a note on the dementia. It didn't seem enough. Granted, he didn't help shape a generation. He wasn't political. But when Bobby Chacon died, something intangible went out the door with him, something that can't be replaced, the spirit of a man uniquely himself. He was the sort of raw character that novelist Nelson Algren might've created, a fighter who, at the height of his fame, was interviewed by People magazine and offered a succinct philosophy: "Life, it ain't the friendliest place to be," he said, "but where else are you going to be?"

When he said it, the hard times were just beginning.

So what do you do when Bobby Chacon dies? The shadowland of relatives is hard to penetrate, so you go to people in boxing, the ones who knew Chacon when he was young and quick, the ones who made money off of him and, in their own way, cared about him. And they tell you that he was a good kid with a wild streak, not the luckiest or smartest guy, but a great guy, a fighter who hit some terrible lows but was still able to smile. You hear about Chacon's charm and charisma, and that he was a publicist's dream. You hear that he was happy all the time, and that even at the end, when he could barely speak, he could still light up a room. It begins to sound like gloss slicked on to mask boxing's horrible price. What we should remember, they insist, is that everybody loved Bobby Chacon.

"We used to call the Olympic Auditorium 'the Madison Square Garden of the west,'" said Don Chargin, the promoter behind many of Chacon's bouts. "Bobby fought there (nine) times. He fought at the Forum around 20 times. He was a big draw in Sacramento too." The formula, Chargin said, was simple enough. "Here was a young kid hitting opponents on the chin and knocking them out. People loved that. Plus, he was a good-looking little guy."

Chacon the KO artist started out as a defensive master, a Mexican-American Willie Pep. "You couldn't touch him," said Chargin. "But he wanted to hear the fans cheer for him, so he started brawling. I told him, 'Don't do that. You're doing well as you are.' He wanted to please the fans. That's what he told me. That's why he started going toe-to-toe." Bill Caplan, the publicist who fitted Chacon with one of the great sobriquets of the era – "Schoolboy" – knew the change in style was good for business but added, "It was part of his downfall too."

Chacon won titles at featherweight and junior lightweight while amassing a record of 59-7-1 (47 knockouts). He earned THE RING's Comeback of the Year award in 1982, and in 2003 he was included in our list of boxing's "100 Greatest Punchers of All Time." Still, such trinkets and stats are a weak metric with which to measure Chacon; they don't take into account that he earned his bones against a murderers row that included Ruben Olivares, Chucho Castillo, Danny "Little Red" Lopez, Cornelius Boza-Edwards, Rafael "Bazooka" Limon and the sharpshooting Alexis Arguello. With that litany of gloved assassins to compete against, Chacon established himself as a star. It was his fourth bout with Limon, a hellish 15-round war that was chosen as THE RING's 1982 Fight of the Year, and the sad circumstances surrounding it, that imprinted Chacon on our minds forever.

The drama began early that year. Chacon was already in his 30s and had suffered some horrible cuts in a loss to Arguello; his wife, Valerie, pleaded with him to retire. "They were crazy about each other," Chargin said.

Bobby Chacon's battles against Rafael Limon (left) and Cornelius Boza-Edwards (below) stamped him as one of his era's great warriors.

"She'd call me, begging me to make him quit, but what could I do? He was a grown man and would make up his own mind."

A highly emotional woman, Valerie ended the impasse by grabbing a rifle and killing herself. The nightmare was compounded by Chacon having a fight scheduled two nights later against Salvador Ugalde. "We were going to cancel," Chargin told THE RING. "But Bobby's lawyer threatened to sue us. Bobby wanted the fight to take his mind off of what happened." Using his grief as a bludgeon, Chacon stopped Ugalde in three rounds.

By the end of the year Chacon had earned a bout with Limon, now the WBC junior lightweight boss. They'd already met three times in the past and were locked at one win apiece, with one bout declared a technical draw; each encounter had been fierce. The fourth, held in Sacramento's Memorial Auditorium on Dec. 11, 1982, ranks alongside any great fight you'd care to name.

Dedicating the fight to Valerie, Chacon endured two knockdowns and several rounds of volcanic action. The furious fighting came to a climax in the 15th, when a combination from Chacon put Limon on his back. With only seconds to go in the bout, Limon lay stunned, exhausted, depleted. He rose, but the knockdown had turned the fight in Chacon's favor. The final scores were 142-141, 141-140 and 143-141 for Chacon, the new titleholder. Without the knockdown, the bout would've been a majority draw. With it, Chacon's legend was made.

"Bobby was the cowboy in the white hat," said L.A. writer and publicist John Beyrooty. "And Limon was the bad guy wearing the black sombrero. The intensity of that bout, the ebb and flow, was beyond remarkable."

For an encore, Chacon defeated old rival Boza-Edwards in a grueling contest that was selected as THE RING's 1983 Fight of The Year. Being victorious in consecutive RING Fights of the Year put Chacon in rare

Chacon evolved from a clever boxer to more of a brawler to please the fans.

MULTIPLE RING WARS

Bobby Chacon is one of seven fighters to win back-to-back RING Fights of the Year since the magazine instituted the award in 1922. Two fighters – Rocky Marciano and Carmen Basilio – won three consecutive Fights of the Year and Muhammad Ali won back-to-back twice. Here are the seven:

BACK TO BACK

ROCKY MARCIANO
1952, '53, '54 – KO 13 Jersey Joe Walcott, KO 11 Roland La Starza, KO 8 Ezzard Charles

CARMEN BASILIO
1955, '56, '57 – KO 12 Tony DeMarco, KO 9 Johnny Saxton, W 15 Sugar Ray Robinson

BACK TO BACK

GENE TUNNEY
1926, '27 – W 10 Jack Dempsey, W 10 Dempsey

MUHAMMAD ALI
1963, '64 – W 10 Doug Jones, KO 7 Sonny Liston

MUHAMMAD ALI
1974, '75 – KO 8 George Foreman, TKO 14 Joe Frazier

BOBBY CHACON
1982, '83 – UD 15 Rafael Limon, W 12 Cornelius Boza-Edwards

MICKEY WARD
2001, '02 – W 10 Emanuel Augustus, W 10 Arturo Gatti

ISRAEL VAZQUEZ
2007, '08 – TKO 6 Rafael Marquez, W 12 Marquez

company. Only Gene Tunney, Rocky Marciano, Carmen Basilio and Ali (twice) had done it previously; only Micky Ward and Israel Vazquez have done it since. Chacon, thought to be finished after losing to Arguello, had become one of the hottest stories in boxing. But the accolades were bittersweet; he knew that part of his fame was because of Valerie's death.

Chacon was born Nov. 28, 1951, in Sylmar, California. By his teen years he was a typical San Fernando Valley kid, low-riding in his '55 Chevy and partying on the beach. But he was a reckless youth, busted once for drug possession and also for assault. It was Valerie who suggested he channel his energy into boxing, and in 1972, while attending Cal State Northridge, Chacon turned professional under the tutelage of trainer Joe Ponce. In 1974 at the Grand Olympic Auditorium in L.A., Chacon KO'd Alfredo Marcano in nine for the vacant WBC featherweight title.

For Chargin, the Marcano bout is especially memorable. "Marcano told me, 'I don't want to fight Bobby because he's such a nice kid.' Plus, they'd sparred and Marcano had handled him easily. I told Bobby this, and he said, 'I'm setting him up.'" Chacon had pulled one of the oldest tricks in the boxing book – he'd intentionally looked bad in sparring so Marcano would underrate him. Then Chacon started insulting Marcano in the press. "He called Marcano names; he called his girlfriend ugly. It was kid stuff, but it worked. Marcano came to my office and said he wanted Bobby. And Bobby beat him."

Schoolboy was no choir-boy. "His will to win and put on a show was incredible," said Beyrooty. "But you had to keep an eye on him at all times. On the night of a fight, he might wander away. He was mischievous. And he signed contracts like he was signing autographs."

Chacon lived large for a while. But in January 1984 he moved up to lightweight and was KO'd in three rounds by Ray Mancini. He fought on, still a battler. Then came the sinister signs of boxer's dementia: slurred speech, mood swings, forgetfulness.

"I'd never seen it in someone so young," said Caplan. "You could see the change," Chargin said. "Sometimes Bobby would just start to cry, out of nowhere."

After a final bout in 1988, Chacon plunged into a rock-bottom twilight zone of drugs, run-ins with the police and failed marriages. In 1991 his son Bobby Jr. was murdered, a death attributed to gang violence. By 2000 Chacon was broke and in a nurse's care. He appeared in public now and then, including a 2005 induction into the International Boxing Hall of Fame in Canastota. He was always immaculately dressed, and younger fighters flocked to him as if to pay homage, but he'd become one of boxing's pitiful, shuffling figures.

"The night before the induction," Chargin recalled, "Bobby knocks on the door of my hotel room at 3 a.m. His face was swollen; he's complaining about a toothache. I told him we'd get him to a dentist in the morning." But the next morning, Chacon was smiling and the swelling was gone. "He'd pulled the tooth out himself," said Chargin. "I don't know how he did it. That was Bobby; he wasn't like the rest of us."

The end came on Sept. 7, 2016, the 42nd anniversary of his win over Marcano. Chacon was 64.

They'll tell you that he was always laughing, even between rounds of his most brutal fights. They'll say he'd give you a big hug and a kiss, whether he knew you or not. They'll say we shouldn't think of his life as tragic. Maybe they're right. But the laughter has stopped. The Forum doesn't host boxing very often these days, nor does the auditorium in Sacramento; the Olympic is now a Korean church. Bobby Chacon is gone, and the chances of seeing another like him are about as good as seeing another 15-rounder on a Saturday afternoon.

WHEN: NOV. 19 • **WHERE:** T-MOBILE ARENA, LAS VEGAS • **TV:** HBO PAY-PER-VIEW • **DIVISION:** LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHT • **AT STAKE:** KOVALEV'S IBF, WBA AND WBO TITLES

RAREFIED AIR

SERGEY KOVALEV VS. ANDRE WARD IS ONE OF THE MORE INTRIGUING – AND UNUSUAL – MATCHUPS IN RECENT YEARS

By **Michael Rosenthal**

The Sergey Kovalev vs. Andre Ward fight is a rarity in a number of ways.

Two fighters in the RING pound-for-pound Top 10 – Kovalev No. 2, Ward No. 4 – are fighting one another. Rare. Two *undefeated* fighters in the Top 10 are fighting one another. Very rare. And two undefeated fighters in the Top *5* are fighting one another. Extremely rare.

THE RING contributor Lee Groves did some research and came up with this:

Kovalev vs. Ward is only the third matchup in which undefeated fighters rated in the RING Top 5 have faced off since the magazine instituted pound-for-pound ratings. The other two: Julio Cesar Chavez vs. Meldrick Taylor in 1990 and Felix Trinidad vs. Oscar De La Hoya in 1999.

That's how special Kovalev vs. Ward is.

And one more thing that makes it unusual: It's perceived as a 50-50 fight, as uncertainties abound before the opening bell. Here are some key questions going into the fight.

1. Is Ward the same fighter who blazed through the Super Six World Boxing Classic?

The answer to that question could determine the outcome. Ward established himself as a major force in the Super Six tournament, from 2009 to 2011. He defeated in succession Mikkel Kessler, Allan Green, Sakio Bika (outside the Super Six), Arthur Abraham and Carl Froch to win the competition and become the likely successor to Floyd Mayweather Jr. and Manny Pacquiao as the No. 1 fighter in the world. That was followed by a 10th-round knockout victory over Chad Dawson in September 2012. Ward was on top of the world. Then, because of promotional and injury problems, he has fought only four times since Dawson. That includes a period of 3½ years in which he fought only twice, inactivity that can build

No one can find fault in the Sergey Kovalev-Andre Ward matchup.

Kovalev is perceived as the stronger of the two but is he as skillful?

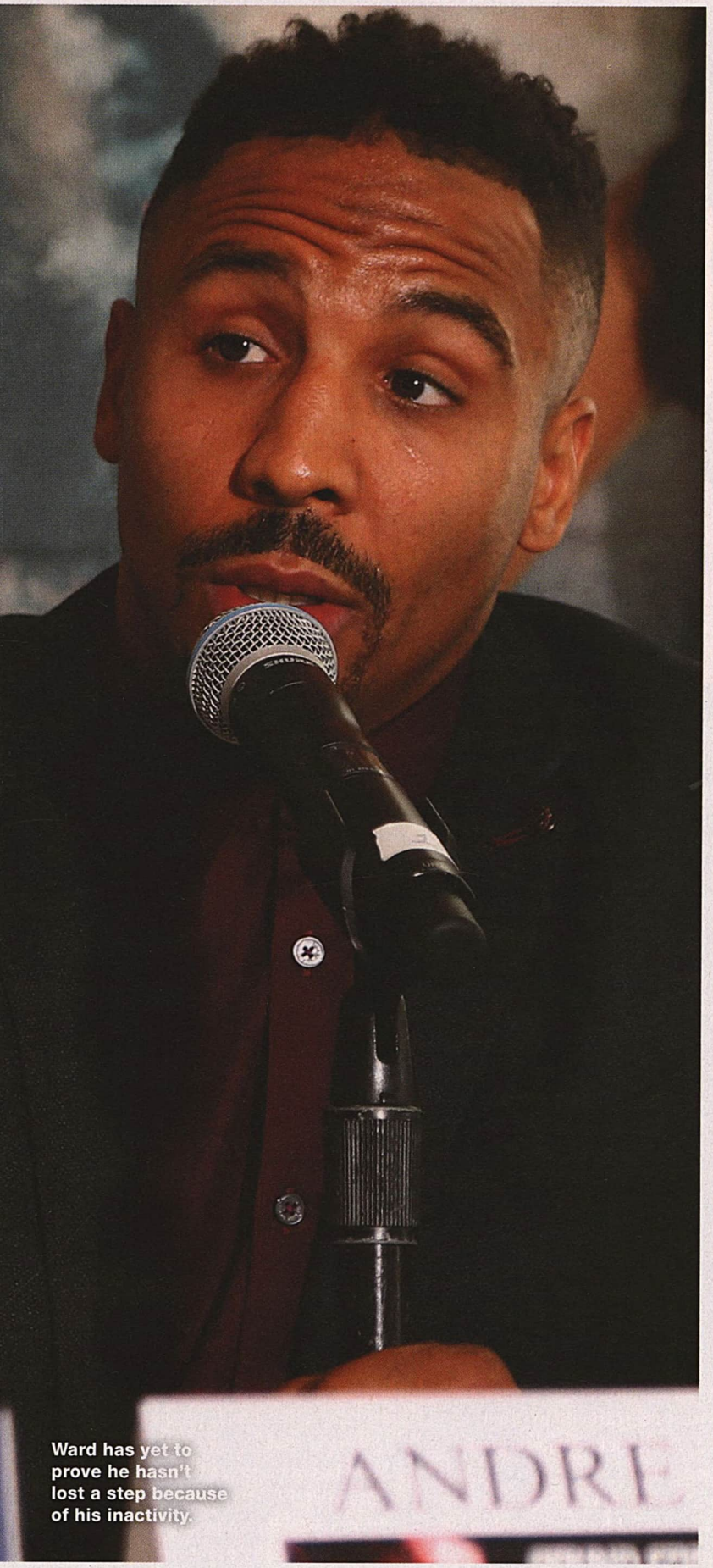
crippling ring rust. And his two most recent fights – victories over Sullivan Barrera and Alexander Brand – tell us little because of the so-so opposition. The Ward of old probably would've neutralized Kovalev, assuming he could cope with the Russian's size. The current version, if he's diminished at all, could be in trouble. And many believe he *is* diminished.

2. Will Kovalev be too big and strong for Ward?

Ward would point out that he was a light heavyweight in his amateur career, which means he's no stranger to dealing with 175-pounders. And it's not a stretch to say that the former 168-pound titleholder has grown into his new division. He's 32, after all. The potential problem for Ward is that he hasn't faced a light heavyweight of Kovalev's ability, strength and punching power. Ward has performed like an anaconda that gradually wraps itself around its prey, leaving it helpless as the former Olympian claims another one-sided victory. That was fairly easy to do at 168 pounds. Will it work at 175? And what happens when Kovalev, one of the bigger punchers in the sport, lands a clean shot on Ward's chin? Ward has been able to absorb hard punches on the rare instances when they've landed. But it's one thing to take a shot from a super middleweight and another to take one from a light heavyweight, particularly one like Kovalev. We'll see what happens.

3. Can Ward earn Kovalev's respect?

Kovalev isn't likely to fight Ward the same way he fought Bernard Hopkins, which was to rely primarily on his boxing skills. Krusher more likely will try to live up to his moniker; expect him to attack aggressively to both the head and body in an effort to break down a man who Kovalev probably feels will be at a size and strength disadvantage. Ward's skills could go a long way in helping him cope. Clever, experienced boxers have a way of defusing aggression by moving their feet, holding when necessary or beating the aggressor to the punch. That is probably what Ward will try to do. He'll also have to get Kovalev to respect his punching power, at least to some degree. Ward's opponents probably would tell you that he punches harder than you might think but does he have enough pop to slow Kovalev down? If he doesn't, it could be an uphill battle for him for as long as the fight lasts.



Ward has yet to prove he hasn't lost a step because of his inactivity.

4. Does Kovalev have the ability to compete with a fighter of Ward's skills?

Kovalev demonstrated against Hopkins that he is more than a hard-punching stalker, as he adopted a surprising game plan and outboxed the old master in 2014. And don't be fooled by Hopkins' age at the time, 49; he could still frustrate almost all light heavyweights even at that point of his career. That said, most believe the version of Hopkins who lost to Kovalev is inferior to a gifted and much younger Andre Ward. And that could mean trouble for Kovalev if Ward is even near the fighter he once was and can handle the Russian's strength. Ward, at his best, is quick, moves well laterally and has impeccable timing. There's a good reason he hasn't lost a fight since he was a minor. Kovalev acknowledged that proficient boxer Isaac Chilemba, his most recent opponent, frustrated him to some degree en route to a unanimous-decision victory. Chilemba is pretty good but he's no Ward. That's why some believe Ward will do to Kovalev what he has done to most of his opponents – outbox him, outthink him and beat him more easily than a 50-50 matchup might suggest.

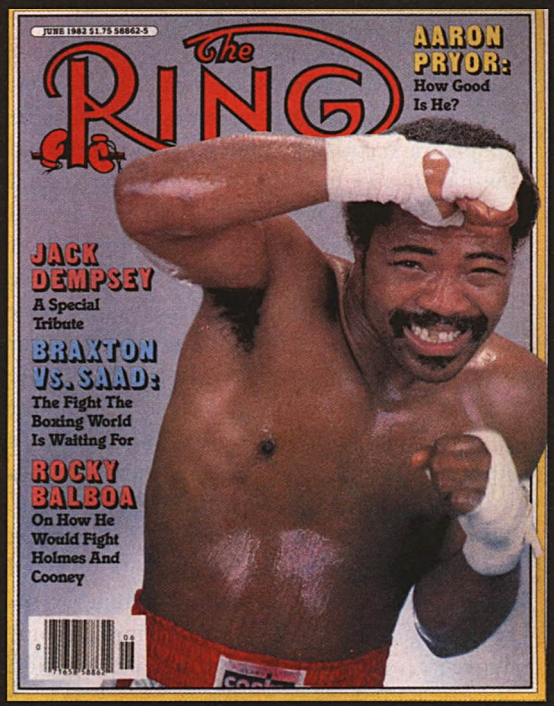
5. What will happen on the inside?

This is one intriguing aspect of the fight. Ward has been a master of inside fighting, slipping punches and slipping his own shots in while sometimes pushing the boundaries set down by the rules. Some have called him a dirty fighter; some say he's resourceful. Bottom line: He has been dominating in close. Of course, the fact his opponent in this fight is Kovalev could change the equation. A big, strong fighter – especially one with ability and experience – is very difficult to manhandle. It's easy to imagine Ward attempting to hold Kovalev only to have Kovalev quickly bust free as a result of his superior strength. And, if Ward gets nasty, don't expect Kovalev to play along. He has a mean side; he'll retaliate. It's also not difficult to imagine that Ward does have the requisite muscle to hold and battle violently with Kovalev inside. And even if he's deficient in the strength department, he probably is clever and experienced enough to compensate in other ways. How the infighting plays out could have a significant impact on the result.

AARON PRYOR: 1955-2016

By Ryan Songalia

Editor's note: THE RING editors received word of Aaron Pryor's death as this issue of the magazine was going to press. A full report will be published in the next issue.



SO LONG, HAWK

THE REIGN OF **AARON PRYOR** WAS SHORTER THAN IT SHOULD'VE BEEN BUT BURNED BRIGHTLY

"What time is it? Hawk time! What time is it? Hawk time!"

That was the battle cry as Aaron Pryor rose from poverty in his native Cincinnati to the WBA and later the IBF junior welterweight titles. Now the man called by some the greatest 140-pound champion of all time no longer asks the time; he died of heart disease on Oct. 9. He was 60.

Pryor turned pro after missing the 1976 U.S. Olympic squad – having lost to Howard Davis Jr. in the Trials – and won his first 24 fights before facing Antonio Cervantes for the WBA junior welterweight title. Aggressive from the start, "The Hawk" knocked Cervantes out in Round 4 to win the title and begin a dominating run.

He went on to make 10 successful title defenses of the 140-pound crown but none was more memorable than his 1982 showdown with Alexis Arguello, a three-division champion and popular TV attraction. Arguello was favored to win a title in a fourth weight class but Pryor, the stronger of the two, wore him down late and forced a referee stoppage with a devastating combination of right hands along the ropes in the 14th round.

"I just kept throwing punches, kept throwing punches," Pryor remembered in the HBO special "Legendary Nights." "I said, 'They are not taking this fight from me.'"

Controversy centered on a bottle from which trainer Panama Lewis ordered Pryor to drink in that fight, saying to another cornerman, "Give me that drink … the one that I mixed." That cast a shadow. But Pryor cemented his superiority in the rematch 10 months later, employing a more evasive boxing style with new trainer Emanuel Steward. He knocked out Arguello in Round 10.

Pryor's career never reached the heights it should have as a result of drugs and later a detached retina and cataracts in his left eye. Proposed dream fights with Sugar Ray Leonard, Ray Mancini and Hector Camacho also fell through for a number of reasons.

"Pryor had tremendous superstar potential because of his combination of world class ability and that style, that at times crazy, frenetic style," Showtime commentator Steve Farhood said.

"I think that in retrospect … he's underrated a little bit because the 'Four Kings' (Leonard, Thomas Hearns, Roberto Duran and Marvin Hagler) were the stars of the early '80s and Pryor never fought any of them because he was too small."

Pryor returned to the ring in 1987 as a shell of himself after more than two years away and was knocked out in seven rounds by Bobby Joe Young in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, as New York and Las Vegas refused to grant him a license because of his eye troubles. He fought just three more times after the Young fight before retiring for good in 1990, his final record 39-1 (35 knockouts).

He said in a 1988 UPI report that he had wasted approximately $500,000 on drugs and three years earlier, according to a 1995 Sports Illustrated article, the fighter was addicted to crack cocaine and living on the streets, contemplating suicide.

His troubles in life – and perhaps much of his success – stemmed from his rough upbringing in Cincinnati's rough Over-the-Rhine neighborhood, where he described his early years as "deprived" and "doomed."

Pryor would later kick his drug habit for good with the help of his wife while attending services at the New Friendship Baptist Church in Cincinnati, where he later became a minister.

"I serve the Lord. I gave my life to Christ. I'm living now and I've been having a great time," Pryor said in 2012. "I've been married for 20 years to the same girl. Things are just going really great for me." RING

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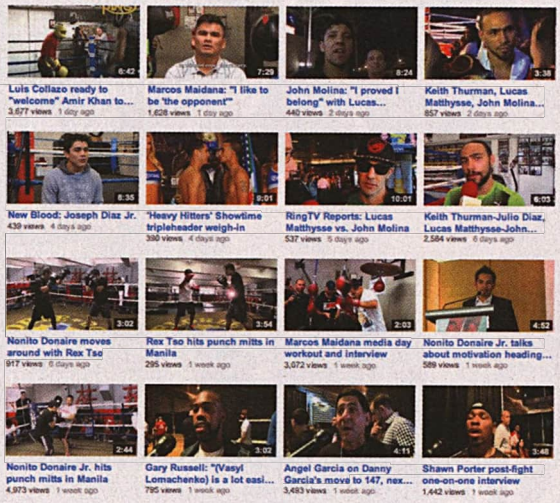

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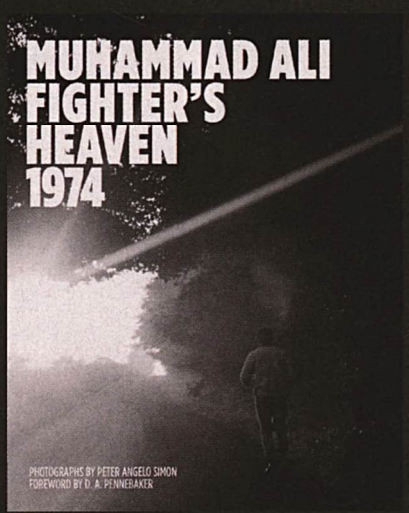
The photos in Simon's book depict the many sides of Ali at his training retreat.

Muhammad Ali: 'Fighter's Heaven'

PHOTOGRAPHER **PETER ANGELO SIMON** PROVIDES A CANDID PEEK INTO MUHAMMAD ALI'S DEER LAKE TRAINING CAMP

Forty-two years ago, The New York Times sent a young photographer named Peter Angelo Simon to Muhammad Ali's training camp in Deer Lake, Pennsylvania, just before Ali journeyed to Zaire to reclaim the heavyweight throne.

Simon spent two days at Deer Lake and shot 33 rolls of black-and-white film, 1080 images in all. Some of the images were contained in a small self-published volume



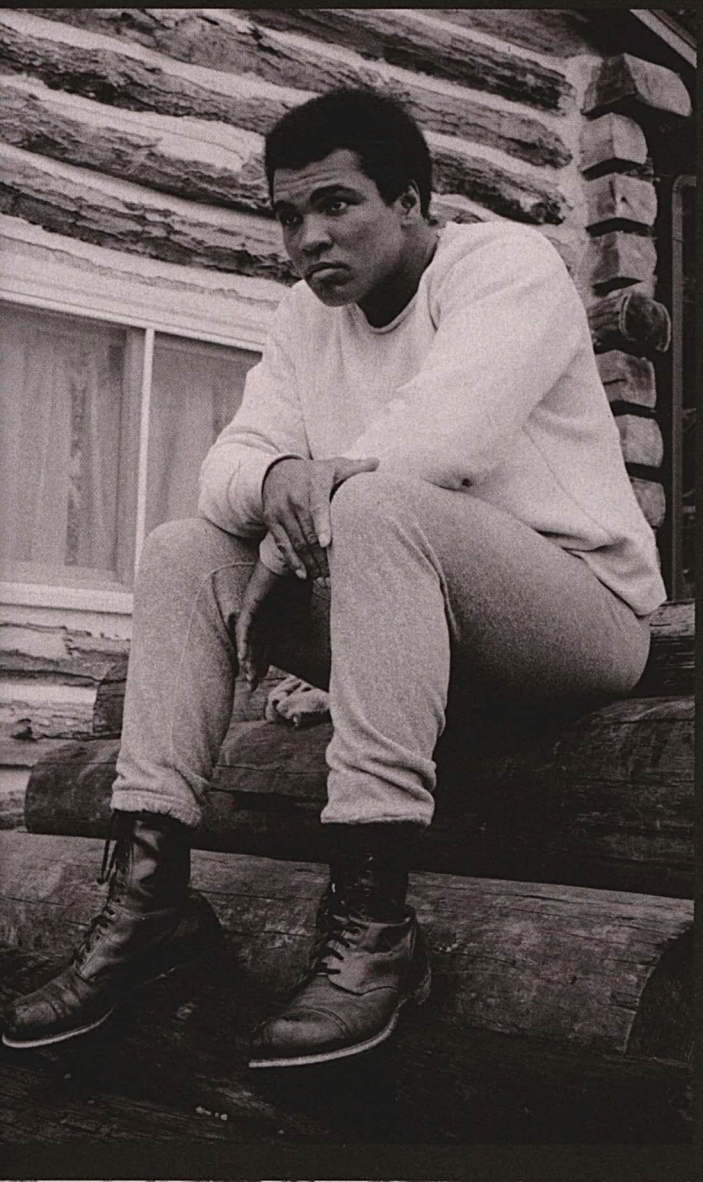
four years ago. Now Simon has fashioned a more ambitious undertaking, a coffee-table photo book entitled "Muhammad Ali: Fighter's Heaven 1974" (Reel Art Press).

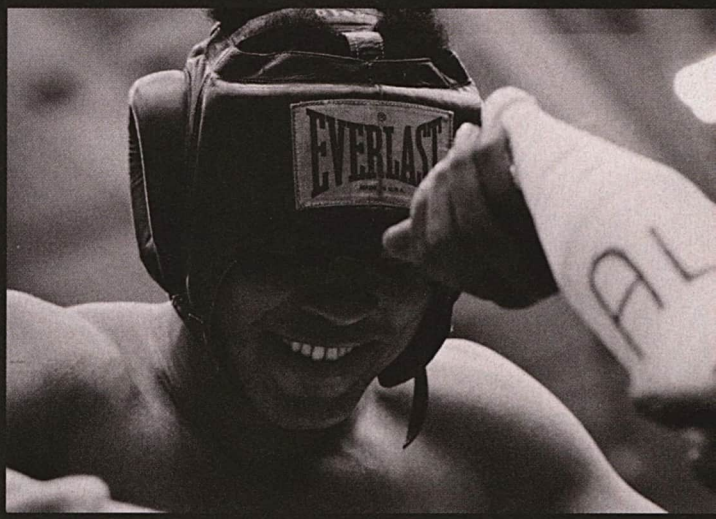
There are no classic photos in "Fighters Heaven." But there are a lot of good ones. Taken together, they recreate a time, place and mood. The book has the requisite images of Ali sparring. But my favorite photos are of Ali away from the ring. Private moments in and outside his cabin at Deer Lake, including the astonishment and joy that greet him on a visit to an assisted living facility and a run through the countryside just after dawn.

One of the photos, in particular, caught my eye. Ali is running past a cow that's grazing in a flower-filled meadow. The meager daylight gives the image the feel of an impressionistic painting. One can imagine Ali calling out, "Hello, Mr. Cow," and throwing a few punches as he runs by. It's harder to conjure up what the cow thinks of Ali. RING

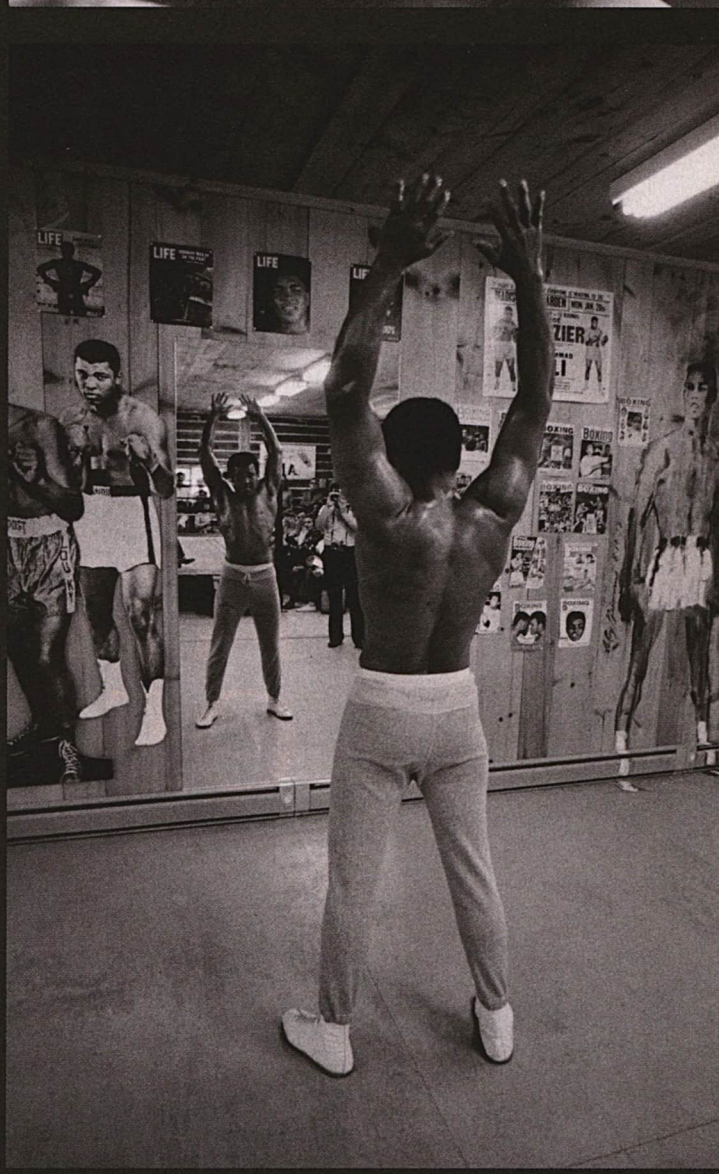
Thomas Hauser can be reached by email at thauser@rcn.com. His most recent book – "A Hard World: An Inside Look at Another Year in Boxing" – was published by the University of Arkansas Press. In 2004, the Boxing Writers Association of America honored Hauser with the Nat Fleischer Award for career excellence in boxing journalism.

PETER ANGELO SIMON/REEL ART PRESS




EVERLAST

JOE FRAZIER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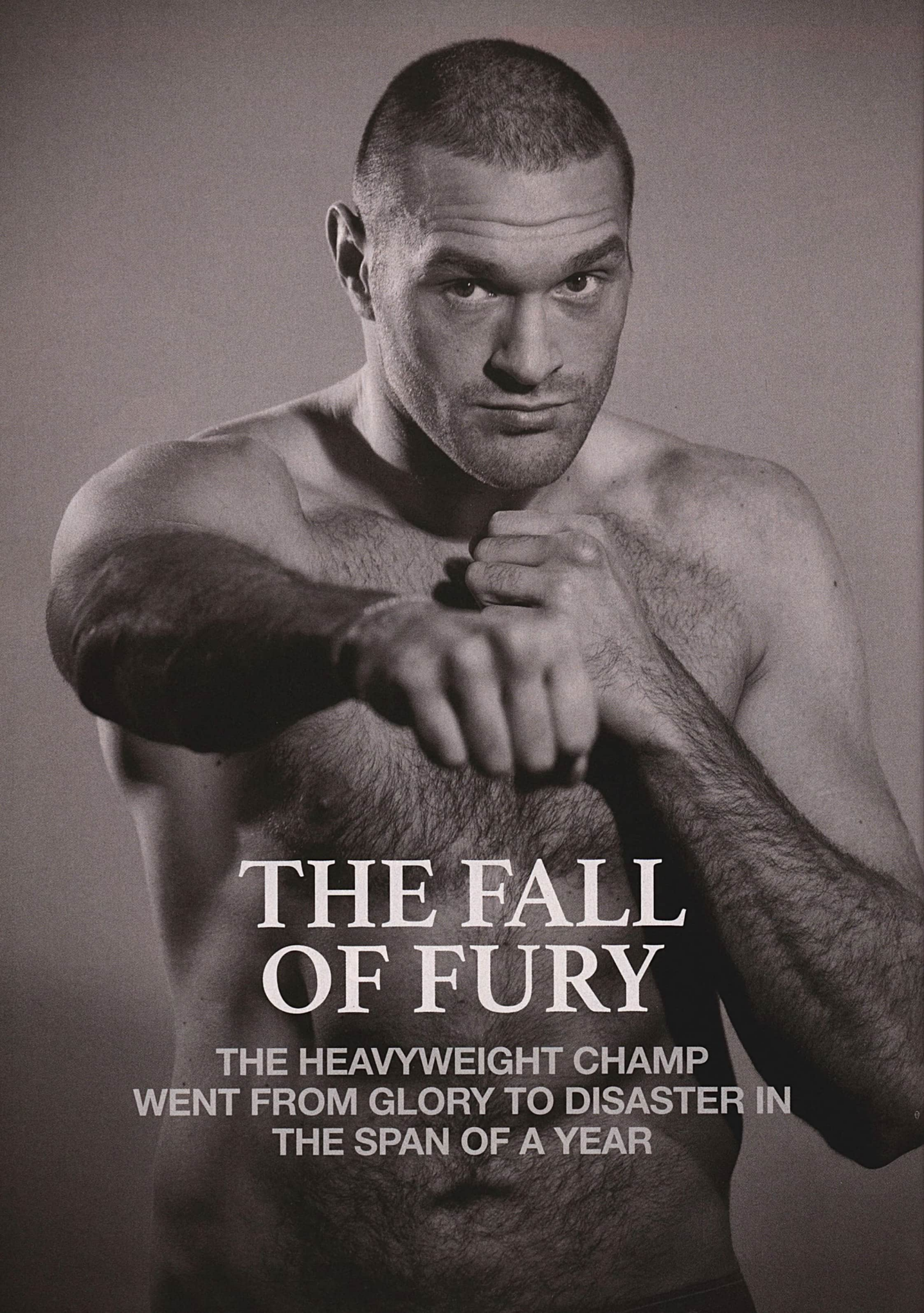


THE FALL OF FURY

THE HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMP WENT FROM GLORY TO DISASTER IN THE SPAN OF A YEAR

Unpredictability. It was the thing that made the rivalry between heavyweights Tyson Fury and Wladimir Klitschko so immediately fascinating, so unusual. It was also what allowed Fury to bamboozle and diffuse Klitschko on a chilly November night in Dusseldorf, Germany, last year.

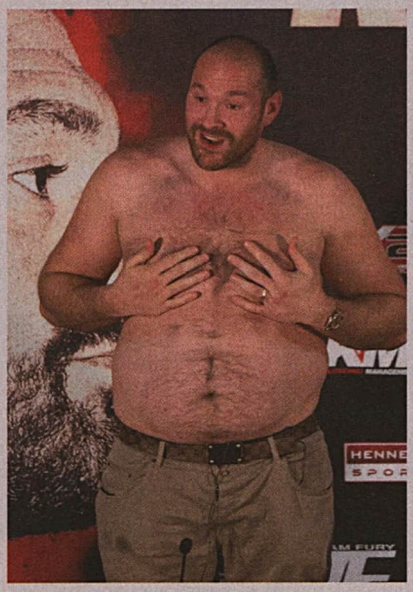
Regrettably, though, it's this same unpredictability which now threatens to tear apart a lot of that good work. Rematch off. Interest of fans waning. Belts given up. Drug tests showing up positive. Fury unwell. British Boxing Board suspending him pending its own inquiries. Unpredictable? It has become unbearable.

Still, despite the collapse of the rematch, scheduled for Oct. 29 in Manchester, England, and everything that has followed, we must tread carefully. Fury, a man who has previously claimed to suffer bouts of depression, is now understood to be struggling with the day-to-day life of a world heavyweight champion. There has been talk of him being unmotivated for any kind of rematch, no longer interested in boxing, and in a bad way.

Fair enough, you might say. It can happen to the best of them. But a revelation such as this is all the more concerning in Fury's case given that we've often been told (by Tyson and by his uncle and trainer, Peter Fury) that without boxing there's a gaping hole in the champion's life – a hole which then fills with negativity and bad thoughts and bad decisions and, ultimately, leads him to a very bad place.

This is why I say tread carefully. This is an altogether deadlier beast, a silent killer, and it should be treated with sensitivity and time if necessary.

Fury's saga of canceled fights with Klitschko suddenly became more complicated on Sept. 30 with a leaked report alleging that Fury was notified he had tested positive for the substance benzoylecgonine, a byproduct of using cocaine, from a random urine sample taken on Sept. 22 by the Voluntary Anti-Doping Association in Lancaster.



Tyson Fury's career blew up after he beat Wladimir Klitschko.

Then, in an extraordinary interview with Rolling Stone magazine early in October, he lifted the lid on what he called his "personal demons."

The boxer says that he abandoned his training camp in Holland in May because he was overcome with depression. That began a downward spiral which culminated in cocaine use and excessive drinking.

"From that day forward, I've never done any training," Fury told Rolling Stone. "I've been out drinking, Monday to Friday to Sunday, and taking cocaine. I can't deal with it and the only thing that helps me is when I get drunk out of me mind. I'm going through a lot of personal demons, trying to shake them off."

It leaves the situation, and indeed Fury's life, in a right mess.

But look at the bare facts. Fury took everything away from Klitschko in his adopted backyard, beat a champion who had reigned for 9½ years, and had the opportunity to do it again – at home this time – and earn in the region of $6 million. That really should say it all.

The patience of Klitschko and the various governing bodies was tested. There was talk as this issue of THE RING went to press of Anthony Joshua, Fury's British rival, meeting Klitschko in a fight to mop up some of the belts.

It's absurd, I know, to contemplate the world heavyweight champion finding himself in such a lucrative position and then not acting on it. Normally they'd cash in. They'd fight regularly. Look at Klitschko's reign, for example. But surely, then, by virtue of the fact that Fury hasn't done this, he hasn't cashed in, we can determine his problem is something far greater than a physical ailment or, as some have suggested, a sudden fear of a man he comfortably outpointed a year ago.

What's more, surely we can sympathize not only with Fury but with Klitschko, too – a former champion who, at 40 years of age, couldn't think of much worse than a 12-month layoff.

Nobody's winning here. With Fury vacating, will the likes of Joshua take much pride in gunning for owner-less belts? Sure, there's money to be made, and "unified champion" is a grand title to hold, but these men are fighters and fighters like to conquer champions. They don't place much value in giveaways.

As for Fury, if his problem is related to mental health, we can only hope he gets all the support and treatment required and is back in action only when the time is right. Furthermore, perhaps this latest twist in an unpredictable tale will encourage others to speak out on a problem that I can assure you is not exclusive to the heavyweight champion of the world.

And let's hope that Peter Fury is right when he says that his 28-year-old charge is "attending the necessary clinics" and will be back in 2017, because he has "a massive future."

As Fury Sr. says: "Boxing is in his

life. It's in his blood. It's in his veins. He doesn't know anything else. He's just frustrated. When you lose interest in everything and you can't see the meaning of anything, clearly you've got a problem."

Let us hope that it gets resolved, because one thing is for certain: Fury remains a huge talent.

DEAN POWELL

Three years ago Frank Warren's matchmaker, Dean Powell, took his own life following a silent struggle with depression, and news of his passing shocked the boxing trade to its core. Few had anything bad to say about the Londoner who juggled a passion for fighting and fighters with a love of punk music. Regrettably, even fewer knew of his troubles.

It's timely, I think, to remember Dean, especially in light of what Tyson Fury may or may not be going through, and to appreciate the stress placed upon the shoulders of those who stay outside the ring on fight night but do all they can to make the show run smoothly. Dean Powell was unquestionably one of those men. The glue which binds it all together, he made matches, he helped run events and he cornered a number of boxers in world title fights; indeed, he was often the coolest and most rational head in a corner.

Bradley Skeete, just one of many fighters who grew close to Dean over the years, recently traveled to Greenwich to visit a particular bench, on which a dedication to Dean has been made. Skeete carried with him a special and recently-acquired item: his British junior middleweight Lonsdale belt, something he promised Dean he would one day win.

"It was always in my mind to do that," Skeete told me. "I promised my mum I'd win the belt because it was Mother's Day the next day, and I also promised I'd take the belt to Dean's bench to show him I'd done the business. I think about Dean when I'm fighting, and when I'm not fighting he's always there with me.

"I've always been told not to forget the people you meet on the way up because you'll always meet them on the way back down. In boxing you're going to have a rise and it's going to come to an end one day. You should always remember the people who help you on the way up."

Bradley Skeete poses with his Lonsdale belt at a bench with an engraved dedication to his mentor, the late Dean Powell.

Powell was a teacher to some, a father figure to others. Skeete can recall countless nuggets of wisdom passed on from him over the years. Don't rush, take the right fights at the right time, you'll get there in the end, son. Skeete, now British champion and on the cusp of a shot at a world title, is starting to believe.

"Leading up to the Frankie Gavin fight (his sole professional defeat), a lot of people wrote me off," he said. "They thought Gavin was leagues above me. I believe it was a close fight. I didn't get the decision, but I didn't do myself any harm, either.

"I've now learned from that fight and, if you look at how I've progressed compared to what Gavin has done since, I think I've come out of it with flying colors. And I'm only going to get better. I seriously believe in the next 12 months I can be mixing it at world level."

The British championship belt, it must be said, means many things to many people. It not only signifies a boxer as being the best in the country, it is also, to look at, arguably the most aesthetically-pleasing belt in the entire sport. So coveted is the belt, in fact, author John Harding has recently written a book, "Lonsdale's Belt: The Story of Boxing's Greatest Prize," celebrating the rich and varied history of the jewel in British boxing's crown.

"We started this particular book with the bareknuckle bouts, to try and give it some background, and found that the belt is like a thread which runs through the whole of British boxing," said Harding. "What I've tried to do is convey its specialness, its uniqueness. I put on the cover 'the most coveted prize' because even if boxers go on to win world titles, many of them still wish they owned a Lonsdale belt. It's one of the most beautiful belts you could hope to see in boxing."

Skeete and Powell's relationship is sensitively touched upon in Harding's book. The author frames it as a moment which perfectly encapsulates the magic and power of the Lonsdale belt. He also mentions how Lennox Lewis winning the title in 1991, before going on to become world heavyweight champion, proved to be a landmark moment for the belt in terms of legitimizing it as something all British boxers should look to own.

"I think the sense of it being an iconic belt has grown," Harding said. "Back in the '90s, perhaps, some of the top boxers ignored it. But one of the themes that came through in the book was the enhanced value in terms of people wanting one and wanting to possess one."

CURTIS WOODHOUSE

Some people want a Lonsdale title so badly they'd do just about anything to get one, even if it meant switching sports. Soccer star Curtis Woodhouse did exactly that in 2006, acting on a longtime desire to test himself in the ring, and targeted one day winning the British title. To him, it would represent his world title, his Everest, but very few who heard of his lofty ambition believed he was capable of achieving it.

Woodhouse was a fine athlete. That was never the issue. He had represented Sheffield United, Birmingham City and Hull City, as well as the England Under-21 national side. The issue, the skeptics said, was that Woodhouse, at 26 years of age, had switched to boxing much too late and would never be able to accumulate the skills necessary to bag a British title.

Stubborn with perhaps a bit of stupid thrown in for good measure, Woodhouse carried on regardless. He cut his teeth in gyms in the north, sparring with countless champions and contenders, tasting the difference in class on a daily basis, and then turned professional in September 2006. Wins followed. Some were good wins, performances that impressed, while others highlighted an athlete in transition. There were, of course, also defeats; setbacks some said would signal an end to his futile efforts. Still he marched on, though. Still he kept winning and occasionally losing.

Then, on the night of Feb. 22, 2014, eight years after he had turned pro, it finally happened. Curtis Woodhouse, former professional soccer player, defeated British champion Darren Hamilton to lift the Lonsdale belt high above his head and simultaneously prove countless people wrong.

And now he has written a book all about it: "Box to Box."

"The stuff I did wrong in my football career and my boxing career were easy to talk about," he said. "That's not real life really. That's just my job – being a sportsman. Talking about my family life and my real life problems was the hardest part. That's my private life. The stuff very few people know about.

"There will be a lot of things in the book that will shock people. They'll have no idea. It was difficult putting myself out there. It felt a little bit like therapy at times. For a long time I didn't read the book myself because some parts were very difficult for me to read."

In the book, Woodhouse discusses highs, lows, regrets and lessons learned. He compares and contrasts the two sports at which he excelled – soccer and scrapping. He also explains how he has used success in the latter to compensate for what he believes was a serious case of underachievement in the former.

"I'm an expert in the game of football," he said. "It's what I've been doing all my life. It's what I excel at. It's what I'm known for. But boxing was the opposite really. I never had any natural talent. I could always fight, but the noble art was very difficult for me to grasp. But I believe boxing gave me redemption and showed me what I lacked in my football career, which was discipline and dedication. I had an abundance of those two things throughout my boxing career. It made me achieve far more than what my talent should have let me achieve. Boxing taught me that in life there are no shortcuts, whereas in football I took every shortcut going."

DOWNS AND UPS

British boxing may be riding high at present but three title fights in succession left a September sting as Kell Brook, Liam Smith and Anthony Crolla were beaten in contests against elite fighters. Brook, who had his eye socket fractured by Gennady Golovkin, still has his IBF welterweight crown but may elect to move up to junior middleweight after a brave, obdurate, albeit short stab at the Kazakhstani; Smith will have to regroup but is certain to bounce back after his loss to Canelo Alvarez, and Anthony Crolla insists a rematch with the excellent Jorge Linares is on his radar for 2017. Indeed, Crolla may have a point about a second fight with the Venezuelan, as history has shown that the Manchester fighter generally fares better the second time around.

At least October began with a sweeter success, as Nathan Cleverly beat former light heavyweight titleholder Juergen Braehmer in Neubrandenburg, Germany, when Braehmer retired just before the start of the seventh round citing a sudden and bizarre dislocated elbow.

But Cleverly was getting on top of the German at that point. Cleverly, also a former 175-pound titleholder, set a relentless pace and went toe to toe with Braehmer for six rounds.

Cleverly agreed to give Braehmer a rematch. "I'll do it if he really wants it. I broke him up and I was going to dominate him," said Cleverly.

Sergey Kovalev, who defeated Cleverly three years ago to claim the WBO belt from the Welshman, defends the WBA light heavyweight title against Andre Ward on Nov. 19 in Las Vegas.

Funny old month. Cheers.

TOP 10

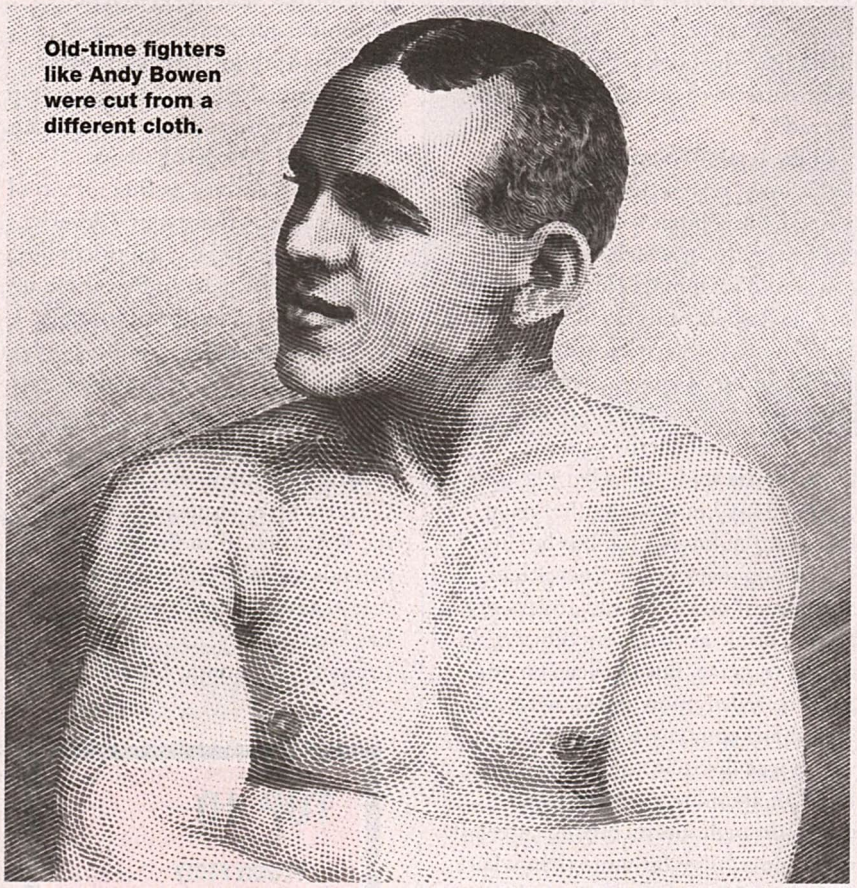
1. TYSON FURY
2. CARL FRAMPTON
3. KELL BROOK
4. AMIR KHAN
5. LEE SELBY
6. JAMES DEGALE
7. JAMIE MCDONNELL
8. SCOTT QUIGG
9. BILLY JOE SAUNDERS
10. CALLUM SMITH

11-15: Liam Smith, Tony Bellew, Terry Flanagan, Anthony Crolla, Ricky Burns.

Through fights of Oct. 2

Gareth A Davies is boxing correspondent for The Telegraph, London.

EXCERPTS FROM THE RINGTV.COM EDITOR'S POPULAR COLUMN

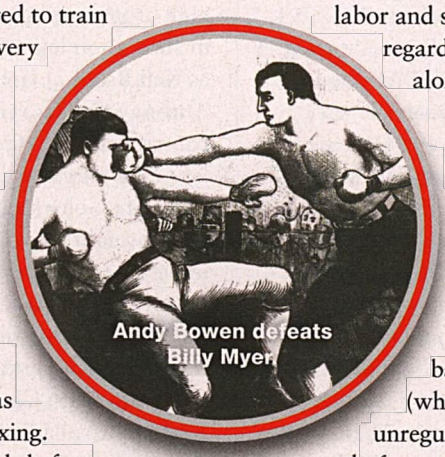


Old-time fighters like Andy Bowen were cut from a different cloth.

Since 2001, RingTV.com Editor Doug Fischer has held an ongoing dialog – which occasionally becomes heated debate – with boxing fans from around the world in "Dougie's Mailbag." The following excerpts are from the Oct. 6 edition of the Friday mailbag.

JOEL, from Montreal, has always wondered how boxers of the late 1800s were able to fight seemingly inhuman distances, going more than 30, 40 and 50 three-minute rounds under the Marquess of Queensberry Rules. Joel, who brought up the all-time record of 111 rounds fought by Andy Bowen and Jack Burke in 1893 as an example, asked Fischer if he knew anything about old training methods that lent themselves to this "ridiculous type of endurance and stamina." He also asked if there was "something different about their fighting styles that allowed their fights to go so long."

DOUGIE'S reply: The notable boxers who bothered to train in the 1800s were very much into distance running and long walks. I once read that Henry Armstrong, whose prime was in the 1930s, trained like the "old timers" of the late 1800s and early 1900s. He was big into shadowboxing. He did 15-20 rounds before his fights so that he would enter the ring "hot." Between bouts, his daily workout routine consisted of 10 miles of roadwork, 10 rounds of sparring, five rounds on the bags and 15 rounds of shadowboxing. Armstrong fought when 15-round title bouts had become the norm, but he fought hard every minute of every round.



Andy Bowen defeats Billy Myer

However, it's my opinion that it was the mindset of the best fighters of the late 1800s and not the training methods that enabled them to push past the limits of human endurance. In fact, it goes beyond sports and athletics. The people of the late 19th century and the turn of the century weren't like us. They had uncommon tenacity by today's standards. It's hard for us to comprehend what it was like back then because so much has changed but I'll try to put it into perspective for you.

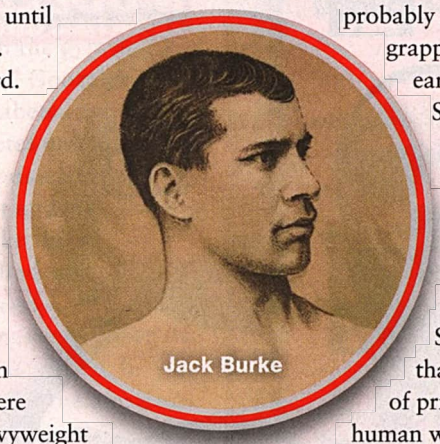
The bout that went 110 or 111 rounds – between Bowen and Burke – took place only 28 years after slavery had only been "officially" abolished in the U.S. The first American to fight in England, the birthplace of modern boxing (and The Queensberry Rules, established in 1867), was Tom Molineaux, who made a name for himself in England and Scotland during the first half of the 1810s.

Molineaux and Bill Richmond, who also made a name for himself in England in the early 1800s, were born slaves. Let that sink in for a minute. What's fighting 30, 40 or even 50 rounds when you were born into a system where your very life was forced labor and servitude without regard to your health (let alone compensation)?

The men that made up the first generation of Queensberry Rules prizefighters either came directly from the bare-knuckle era (when fights were unregulated, unofficiated and often to the finish) or were influenced by it, and the majority were from the most desperate and lowest rungs of society. They were the sons

ED MULHOLLAND, K2 PROMOTIONS

of farm hands, coal miners, ex-slaves and immigrant indentured servants. They grew up watching the adults around them work until they dropped dead. They had to be hard. Most of them had to fend for themselves as children. The first famous prizefighters in America – men like John Morrissey and John L. Sullivan, who were recognized as "heavyweight champion" – were the sons of poor Irish immigrants who worked full-time blue collar or manual labor jobs such as bartending, plumbing and bricklaying when they were middle-school age. (Morrissey, who would be elected to congress after his boxing career, had also been a gang leader and hired political thug. Do yourself a favor and watch Martin Scorsese's "Gangs of New York" if you haven't already seen it. The period film is an excellent portrayal of what the immigrant areas of New York City were like when Morrissey was duking it out against the likes of Yankee Sullivan and John C. Heenan.)


Jack Burke

Needless to say, education at that time (and for decades after) was only for the rich and privileged. Everyone else had to work. Kids worked. It was perfectly normal for 12-year-olds to work 60-hour weeks in factories, textile and cotton mills up until the mid-1930s. (There weren't any federal laws regulating under-aged labor, work hours or minimum wages until the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938.) The mindset was work, work, work, for as long as you were able to stay conscious no matter how harsh and miserable the conditions were. And you never quit, no matter what. You didn't work, you didn't eat.

Having said all that, you should also realize that just because a bout went 40-plus rounds doesn't mean that the combatants were fighting non-stop, tooth-and-nail for every minute of every round. I'm sure there was a fair amount of pacing and posing going on. There was also probably a fair amount of grappling. As I noted earlier, these guys (like Sullivan) came from the bare-knuckle era, where holding, throwing, gouging, even kicking at times was permitted. So don't think that these pioneers of prizefighting were human windmills like Harry Greb or Armstrong, although they helped pave the way for those boxing legends of the 1920s and '30s.

STEVEN, from Ontario, Canada, asked for Fischer's take on Peter Quillin's rumored move to super middleweight with Virgil Hunter in the former WBO middleweight beltholder's corner. He also asked Fischer to name a few "possible realistic opponents" for Quillin at 168 pounds.

DOUGIE'S reply: Quillin might fight more comfortably at super middleweight than at middleweight at this stage of his career. He's got a large build and frame that seems more suited for 168 pounds than 160. I thought he looked very good when he weighed in at 165.5 pounds for his three-round stoppage of Jesse Brinkley, and that was more than five years ago. I also think Hunter can add some boxing finesse and common sense to his somewhat raw, brute-force game. Regarding realistic opponents for Quillin, I think anyone in the Top 10 is fair game. Quillin is a former world titleholder. He's 33 years old with over 10 years in the pro game. If he's not ready to face the best available competition at super middleweight after one or two tune-ups, then I think it's time for him to find a 9-to-5 gig. His goal should be to challenge the Badou Jack-James DeGale winner. RING

Danny Gonzalez once weighed 225 pounds.

NEW BODY, NEW MAN

DANNY GONZALEZ WHIPPED HIMSELF INTO SHAPE AND INTO A LEGITIMATE PROSPECT

Trainer Moises Roman recalls the first time he saw Daniel Gonzalez walk into the gym.

"He was a little, shy, fat kid," says Roman, not bothering to sugarcoat his opinion. "He had both his hands in his pockets. He was standing behind his mother. He couldn't hit the pads. He couldn't wrap his hands. He couldn't hit the bag. He was too shy for me. ... His footwork was terrible. I don't even know how he walked."

From that glowing observation sprouted one of the more satisfying tales in boxing.

Gonzalez didn't set out to become an undefeated prospect with designs on winning a world title. Heck, he didn't even start boxing to be a fighter. He started boxing when he was 17 to lose weight and to stay clear of diabetes, which had afflicted his mother, Mercedes Cruz, and older brother, Michael.

A rotund 225 pounds when he first hooked up

with Roman, Gonzalez fought to become healthy and slim, not to sharpen his skills.

"I was really overweight so (my mom) threw me in the gym and I ended up liking it," Gonzalez said. "My mom had diabetes and my brother had diabetes and asthma. He was like 350 pounds. So I was kind of getting fat and was going to end up like just like them."

The pounds melted away as Gonzalez overhauled his diet and adopted a strict regimen of exercise. Six months after he started, he was already competing in the amateurs.

"I was obsessed," he said.

Today, 85 pounds lighter, the vegetarian is svelte and muscular, a living example for those battling obesity. He's also a popular junior welterweight who is 12-0-1 (5 knockouts) and has a chance to disrupt the sport's normal pecking order.

Gonzalez was a respectable amateur but not among the blue-chip prospects with Olympic pedigrees, who typically receive opportunities on that basis. He has had to work to gain notice. He's a pressure fighter who relies on his fitness and hunger to outwork opponents.

If he ever does win a title, it will be one of the more improbable stories in boxing.

"In the beginning I just wanted to lose weight and learn to fight," said Gonzalez, who is promoted by Star Boxing's Joe DeGuardia. "That was about it. I was never sure about being pro. In the beginning it was my dream to be in the Olympics and just to be a great amateur. But as I went with it, I knew I wanted to do it for the rest of my life."

Now, Gonzalez, who avenged a draw on his record by later out-pointing Ray Velez, is intoxicated with the success he's had, on the scales and in the ring.

Gonzalez took up the sport at an advanced age so he's comfortable taking a gradual road to a title shot. But he's adamant he will eventually get there.

"My mindset is that if I'm going to do something, I'm going to do it 100 percent," Gonzalez said. "So I believed once I started that I'm going to be great. And I still believe I'm going to be even greater and I'm going to be a world champion one day. People don't realize how much I've put into this. This is a lifestyle.

"I know when the opportunity comes I'm going to show up and be a world champion. It's just a matter of time." RING

THE ESSENTIALS
DANIEL GONZALEZ

Age: 26

Weight class: Junior welterweight

Height: 5 feet 7 inches (170 cm)

Stance: Orthodox

Hometown: Woodhaven, New York

Record: 12-0-1 (5 KOs)

Biggest strengths: Gonzalez is an aggressive fighter who's been able to outwork his opponents; he throws a lot of punches and applies lots of pressure. He lists mental toughness as his best attribute and expects to be able to dig deeper than his opponents.

Biggest question marks: Gonzalez does not have a deep amateur background and isn't regarded as a blue-chip prospect. He's gotten to where he is through hard work. When he faces a higher caliber of opponent, it will be interesting see whether he can keep up and whether his heart and determination are big enough to overcome those hurdles.

3 MORE TO WATCH

JOSE GONZALEZ
FEATHERWEIGHT

Gonzalez (5-0-1, 2 KOs) has good bloodlines: He's the cousin of pound-for-pound king Roman "Chocolatito" Gonzalez. The 20-year-old went 34-6 as an amateur and recently signed with Top Rank. "El Chocolatito," as he is known, has good boxing ability and an entertaining, flashy style, although he did seem to tire late in his draw against Sean Acosta on June 11. He also seems to be advanced defensively and blessed with good reflexes, not unlike his more famous relative.

ANDREW SELBY
FLYWEIGHT

Selby (5-0, 3 KOs) is the younger brother of IBF featherweight titleholder Lee Selby and is regarded as perhaps the greatest Welsh amateur boxer ever after winning silver in the 2011 World Championships and bronze in the 2013 Worlds, as well as gold in the European Championships in 2011 and 2013. A smooth, rhythmic boxer, Selby, 27, often switches back and forth from orthodox to southpaw. He has already won the British flyweight title with a 12-round decision over Louis Norman on May 14.

MYKQUAN WILLIAMS
WELTERWEIGHT

The 18-year-old Williams (4-0, 3 KOs) already has some juice behind him; he recently signed with promoter Lou DiBella and is managed by Jackie Kallen. Williams is an action fighter with fast, heavy hands. The East Hartford, Connecticut, resident also has a harrowing backstory that makes him easy to root for. His father was reportedly murdered when he was just a week old and his house burned down when he was 10 – horrible setbacks that make his current situation all the more compelling.

TRAILBLAZER

A PERSISTENT **DEE HAMAGUCHI** OPENED DOORS FOR FEMALE BOXERS

Dee Hamaguchi (right) went down swinging in her final fight, against Hollie Dunaway in 2006.

Over two decades ago, Dee Hamaguchi wasn't thinking about becoming a trailblazer. She just wanted to fight. But she became one because certain people didn't want her in the ring and she wasn't about to let that pass.

"I don't think about it like that too much because it was just something that I wanted to do," she humbly said of her pioneering status in the boxing world.

Hamaguchi, 51, doesn't chase down the media to tell her story. She doesn't carry a neon sign screaming, "Look at me." That's not her style. Even when reminded of what she did in 1995, when she fought to open up the New York Golden Gloves competition to women, she says she "was just very fortunate to be able to fulfill that."

But it was a big deal. Without Hamaguchi's fight, there might not be a Heather Hardy, Maureen Shea, Alicia Ashley, Amanda Serrano, Christina Cruz or Melissa Hernandez. Many female fighters owe

her a debt.

But the Montreal-born Hamaguchi wasn't pondering the future when she decided that she wanted to fight; she just assumed she would be allowed to in New York. And then she was told she couldn't despite a 1993 decision by USA Boxing to allow women to compete.

First, after applying for the 1994 Gloves with the name D. Hamaguchi, she was told she couldn't compete because she missed the physical. A subsequent application for the Empire State Games also came up empty.

"That's when I pushed the envelope a little bit because I showed up for the weigh-in for the Empire State Games," she said. "I basically forced them to write me a letter explaining why I couldn't enter. And they did – by hand on a piece of yellow legal paper. I took that to somebody at the ACLU and they picked up the cause at that point."

Hamaguchi's case was simple and she knew it because she had recently taken a building management course that gave her a primer on the New York state law that forbade discrimination in amateur sports. It wasn't an easy battle, though. At least she received support in the place she called home – Gleason's Gym.

"I got so much positive support from the other boxers, from most of the trainers and definitely from Bruce Silverglade, the owner of Gleason's Gym," she said. "Fighters have this interesting bond. It's sort of that 'We few, we happy few, we band of brothers' type of feeling. When I came into the gym it felt like it didn't matter that I was a woman, I'm a small woman, I'm a small Asian woman – none of those things mattered if I was sincere and willing to put in the work. That seemed to garner respect from other fighters."

On April 7, 1995, the fight outside the ring – which she had won – turned into a fight inside of it as she faced future world champion Jill Matthews in the 106-pound NY Golden Gloves finals at Madison Square Garden. Hamaguchi was beaten by "The Zion Lion," but it didn't matter because now the doors were open, never to be closed again.

Twenty-one years later, Hamaguchi is proud of the role she played in the history of the sport even if it doesn't feel as if it was that long ago.

"In a lot of ways, it really doesn't," she said. "But if I look at the progress of what women have been able to do in boxing, and definitely the American women, it feels like a lot of ground has been covered since that inaugural evening of the '95 Golden Gloves at Madison Square Garden. But in terms of myself personally, no, it feels like just a few years ago."

Maybe that's because Hamaguchi has never stopped fighting. A few years after the Gloves, she turned pro. And while she only posted a 1-8-3 record over the course of her six-year career, she did challenge twice for a world title and fought solid competition throughout.

Over the last couple years, Hamaguchi, a former national champion in judo who now makes her home in Los Angeles, has stayed busy by training in mixed martial arts. She hopes to compete eventually. But she still has a soft spot for boxing, and she believes that the future is bright for the sport.

"I'm still very positive about women's boxing because I think we have a great product," she said. "I know we have a great product. We're just not marketed well. That's the piece that's missing – the marketing and someone who's willing to promote it." RING

FIGHTER OF THE MONTH

CECILIA BRAEKHUS

TKO 2 Anne Sophie Mathis

The pressure was on for undisputed welterweight champion Cecilia Braekhus on Oct. 1. Not only was the "First Lady" fighting the dangerous Anne Sophie Mathis – whom she'd already defeated by decision in 2012 – but she was doing it for the first time in her home country of Norway, which recently lifted its ban on professional boxing. Braekhus' response? A second-round TKO that thrilled the packed house in Oslo. That's the way you have a homecoming.

POUND FOR POUND

1. **CECILIA BRAEKHUS**
   Norway • 29-0 (8 KOs)
   Welterweight
2. **DELFINE PERSOON**
   Belgium • 36-1 (16 KOs)
   Lightweight
3. **YESICA YOLANDA BOPP**
   Argentina • 29-1 (12 KOs)
   Junior flyweight
4. **JELENA MRDJENOVICH**
   Canada • 36-10-1 (19 KOs)
   Featherweight
5. **JESSICA CHAVEZ**
   Mexico • 28-4-3 (4 KOs)
   Flyweight
6. **LAYLA MCCARTER**
   U.S. • 38-13-5 (9 KOs)
   Lightweight
7. **ERICA ANABELLA FARIAS**
   Argentina • 23-1 (10 KOs)
   Junior welterweight
8. **IBETH ZAMORA SILVA**
   Mexico • 26-5 (11 KOs)
   Junior flyweight
9. **ZULINA MUNOZ**
   Mexico • 47-1-2 (28 KOs)
   Junior bantamweight
10. **AMANDA SERRANO**
    U.S. • 29-1-1 (22 KOs)
    Featherweight

Through fights of Oct 2, 2016

A crowd of 51,240 watched Canelo Alvarez demolish Liam Smith at AT&T Stadium in Arlington, Texas.

RINGSIDE REPORTS

BY NORM FRAUENHEIM

CANELO ALVAREZ KO 9 LIAM SMITH

Date: Sept. 17
Site: AT&T Stadium, Arlington, Texas
Division: Junior middleweight
Weights: Alvarez 154 pounds, Smith 154
RING ratings (before fight): Alvarez **C** at middleweight, Smith No. 8
Network: HBO (PPV)

In terms of place, if not time, it was an event. Canelo at the Jerry Dome. The redhead beneath the big top. Whatever the sales pitch, it was about one fighter and a famous arena.

Canelo Alvarez can never be as big as the building, but he's about as big as it gets in boxing these days after his heavy hands pounded out a businesslike victory that appeared to be a step in an ongoing attempt to turn the Mexican into a global celebrity.

There was never a doubt about what would happen. Although tough and game, Liam Smith had no chance. Sure enough, the U.K. junior middleweight relinquished the WBO's 154-pound belt in the ninth round after his midsection was struck by an artillery-like left, the only good hand Canelo had. Canelo fractured his right thumb in the second, thus shelving him for the rest of 2016.

Smith (23-1-1, 13 knockouts) arrived in the U.S. unknown. He left in pain. He also played the role Golden Boy needed in its long-term promotional plan. Golden Boy chief Oscar De La Hoya argues that Canelo (48-1-1, 34 KOs) is the game's A-side since Floyd Mayweather Jr. retired. It's a many-sided argument that will never get settled until Canelo faces Gennady Golovkin.

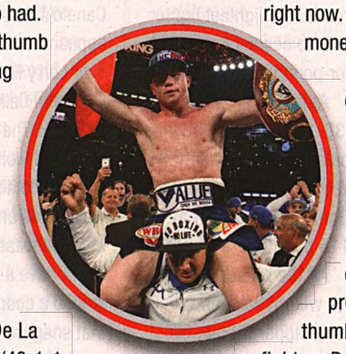
In the here-and-now, the task in a ring above the 50-yard line on the Dallas Cowboys home field was to deliver box-office proof. Mission accomplished. Canelo drew a crowd of 51,240, surpassing crowds from the game's other A-sider, Manny Pacquiao, who appeared in two bouts at the stadium. In 2010, crowds of 50,994 and 41,724 were reported for Pacquiao victories over Joshua Clottey and Antonio Margarito.

HBO's pay-pay-view number was not expected to surpass 300,000. That's considered a disappointment in the post-Mayweather era, which included 2.2 million for a victory over Canelo in 2013.

But there's a new marketplace – smaller expectations – confronting boxing, which has been hit hard by anger at the Mayweather-Pacquiao dud in May 2015. De La Hoya says he is trying to resurrect the business with Canelo. If he succeeds, then the biggest boxing crowd ever at the NFL's best-known stadium will represent a stepping-stone.

But that brings us back to GGG, who stopped Kell Brook on Sept. 10 in London. Canelo, the lineal 160-pound champ who surrendered the WBC's belt after stopping Amir Khan, continues to face pointed questions about GGG, the feared middleweight. He answered them again, moments after he left Smith looking a little bit like Tony Romo, the Cowboys' oft-injured quarterback.

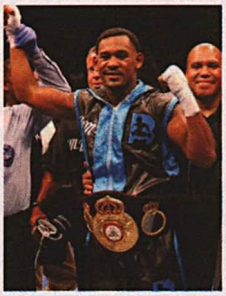
"I fear no one," Canelo said after knocking Smith down three times. "I am the best fighter right now. We offered GGG twice the money to fight. He didn't accept."



What was – or wasn't – offered is the subject of a debate that figures to rage until there's an opening bell. At this point, the earliest possibility appears to be September 2017. A chance of May 2017 was probably eliminated by Canelo's thumb injury. He had planned to fight on Dec. 10.

His next fight, his first against a true 160-pounder, could be in early 2016. Billy Joe Saunders, David Lemieux and Curtis Stevens have been mentioned in a step up that figures to be more about weight than celebrity. »

WORLDWIDE RESULTS— Go to: bit.ly/worldwide-results or scan the QR code to see weekly fight results at RingTV.com.



NO. 2 DANIEL JACOBS TKO 7 SERGIO MORA

Sept. 9, Reading, Pa. (Spike TV)

Daniel Jacobs said it was a rematch he never wanted. Then he found out fans agreed with him.

Boos filled the Santander Arena with a lesson that said sometimes a sequel only means having to say you're sorry.

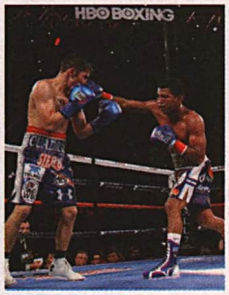
"The first fight left a bad taste in people's mouths," Jacobs said.

So did the second one, which managed to add insult to injury by lasting five rounds longer than the fiasco stopped in 2015 because Mora reportedly injured his ankle in a second-round knockdown.

Not even a healthy ankle helped Mora (28-5-2, 9 KOs) stand up in a rematch that saw Jacobs (32-1, 29 KOs) knock him down five times.

Jacobs reluctantly took the fight, saying he wanted to stay busy amid hopes of a shot at Gennady Golovkin.

Next time do some sparring.



ROMAN GONZALEZ UD 12 NO. 2 CARLOS CUADRAS

Sept. 10, Inglewood, Calif. (HBO)

Nicaragua's flag is a perfect fit for Roman Gonzalez. He wraps himself in it, in the ring and on the scale.

The blue and white colors are always there, alongside a perfect record for the country's brightest symbol of sporting success.

Nicaragua didn't win a medal at the Rio Olympics. Gonzalez (46-0, 38 KOs), on the other hand, only wins in an unprecedented run for the lightest fighter ever to occupy the pound-for-pound's top pedestal.

Against Carlos Cuadras (35-1-1, 27 KOs), he was balanced and brilliant. Yet it wasn't easy. It was Gonzalez' first bout at 115 pounds.

All the reasons for weight classes were apparent late in Gonzalez's 117-111, 116-112, 115-113 victory for a fifth title in a fourth division. His marked face left questions about what might happen against a growing Naoya Inoue.

In a post-fight celebration, Gonzalez cried, tears through bruised eyes, in dedicating the victory to late mentor Alexis Arguello.

C GENNADY GOLOVKIN TKO 5 KELL BROOK

Sept. 10, London (HBO)

The beat goes on. The beatdowns, too.

Talk about whether Gennady Golovkin-Canelo Alvarez will ever happen droned on while Golovkin (36-0, 33 KOs) continued, business as usual, with a 23rd successive stoppage – a fifth-round TKO of welterweight-turned middleweight Kell Brook (36-1, 25 KOs).

To put it in perspective, a Golovkin fight hasn't gone to the scorecards since June 2008, about four months before Canelo's first U.S. appearance in a decision over Larry Mosley in Cabazon, California.

Brook, The Ring's No. 1-ranked welterweight, looked a lot like a waystation on the road to the inevitable. Brook didn't have a chance. He landed a couple of blows that snapped back GGG's head in the second round. That was a surprise. Also an illusion. Brook's corner threw in the towel when swelling appeared below his right eye, the result of a fractured orbital bone.

NO. 6 LEE HASKINS UD 12 STUART HALL

Sept. 10, London (HBO, Sky Sports Box Office)

Punches followed insults. There was substance after the rhetoric.

The combinations were unlikely, but Lee Haskins put them together in a 117-111, 116-112, 115-113 decision over Stuart Hall for a bantamweight belt.

"Take it from me, he hits very hard," said Haskins, whom Hall (20-5-2, 7 KOs) called a frail playboy before the opening bell. "I am not stupid enough to stand here and get caught by big shots. I'm not here to show I'm the toughest man in Britain. I'm here to win fights and get paid."

Haskins (34-3, 14 KOs) proved to have enough smarts to know who he is and what he had to do in a rematch of a 2012 decision over Hall, who started slowly and got outworked in the end.

"I started late, it was silly and it's a bad night," said Hall, suddenly out of energy and insults.

NO. 4 JOHNRIEL CASIMERO TKO 10 CHARLIE EDWARDS

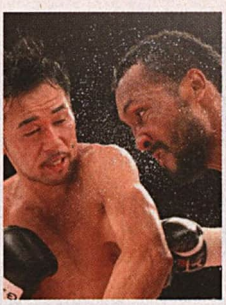
Sept. 10, London (HBO, Sky Sports Box Office)

Put Johnriel Casimero in the long line of guys hoping for a shot at Roman "Chocolatito" Gonzalez, who is attracting gigantic attention among the world's best little big men.

Casimero's credentials were powerful and plentiful in a 10th-round stoppage of U.K. flyweight Charlie Edwards on a card featuring Gennady Golovkin's victory over Kell Brook.

"He can fight anyone," Sean Gibbons, of Casimero's management, told RingTV.com after the Filipino (23-3, 15 KOs) retained the IBF's 112-pound belt. "The goal is to fight the best and the best is 'Chocolatito.'"

At 23, Edwards (8-1, 3 KOs), who was finished by a Casimero left midway through the 10th, won't be confused with Naoya Inoue, Juan Francisco Estrada, Donnie Nietes or anybody else lobbying for a date with Gonzalez. Casimero's victory was predictable, yet enough to ensure his place in a lengthening line.



NO. 1 SHINSUKE YAMANAKA TKO 7 NO. 2 ANSELMO MORENO

Sept. 16, Osaka, Japan (beIN)

Shinsuke Yamanaka has faith in his left hand. God's Left, he calls it. It turned Anselmo Moreno into a believer.

Yamanaka (26-0-2, 18 KOs) survived early and prevailed in the end with left-handed power that Moreno (36-5-1, 12 KOs) couldn't escape in the Japanese bantamweight's 11th title defense, a rematch dramatic enough to be a Fight of the Year contender.

That righteous left was always there, waiting and powerful enough to save Yamanaka from a fourth-round knockdown. Moreno, who lost a split decision in Tokyo last year, had the momentum. But Yamanaka's left had already landed, flooring Moreno in the first and sixth.

Early in the seventh it landed again, dropping Moreno for the third of four times. The end was near. At 1:09 it was over, Moreno defenseless against that left and knocked out for the first time ever.

NO. 7 OLEKSANDR USYK UD 12 NO. 3 KRZYSZTOF GLOWACKI

Sept. 17, Gdansk, Poland (Sky Sports, Polsat Sport PPV)

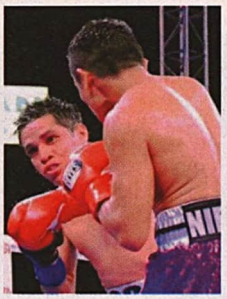
Move over Cuba. Oleksandr Usyk is another reason to think that Ukraine's amateur system is the world's best.

Usyk, an Olympic gold medalist at 201 pounds in London, didn't win a world title as fast as fellow Ukrainian Vasyl Lomachenko.

Usyk needed 10 pro bouts to win a major belt, beating Krzysztof Glowacki for the WBO's cruiserweight title. That's seven more tries than Lomachenko.

Lomachenko's racehorse pace to the top of the game makes everybody look like a plodder.

But Usyk (10-0, 9 KOs) looked a lot like a longtime champ and a little bit like his Olympic teammate with a precise jab, agile feet and ring generalship that also made Glowacki (26-1, 16 KOs) look awkward in a 117-111, 119-109, 117-111 decision.



DONNIE NIETES UD 12 NO. 7 EDGAR SOSA

Sept. 24, Carson, Calif. (beIN, ABS-CBN)

Donnie Nietes skipped through his first fight at a new weight like a guy throwing a flat stone across a short pond. It was easy enough to think his stop at flyweight won't last long.

Nietes (39-1-4, 22 KOs) talked about Roman "Chocolatito" Gonzalez and Juan Francisco Estrada after turning Edgar Sosa (52-10, 30 KOs) into an afterthought in a 120-108 shutout on the scorecards in the ex-junior flyweight champion's first bout at 112 pounds.

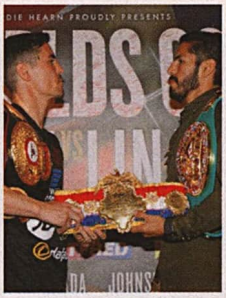
"I'm looking forward to Estrada and Chocolatito in the future," Nietes told reporters after the Filipino did everything but stop Sosa.

Those are bold words. Then again, it was a bold debut against a former 112-pound champ.

Nietes staggered Sosa twice early and then scored, almost at will, the rest of the way.

"I'm happy," Nietes said.

Ambitious, too.



NO. 1 JORGE LINARES UD 12 NO. 3 ANTHONY CROLLA

Sept. 25, Manchester, U.K. (Sky Sports)

Jorge Linares has traveled the world. Conquered some of it, too.

The Venezuelan, who began his career in Japan, remains unbeaten in boxing's busiest real estate.

Linares is 2-0 in the U.K. after upsetting Anthony Crolla for the vacant RING lightweight championship in a bout that screamed for a rematch.

"We gave Manchester a beautiful fight," said Linares (41-3, 27 KOs), whose superior hand speed was enough for a 117-111, 115-113, 115-114 decision. "Why not come back?"

Thus far, anywhere in the U.K. works for Linares, who stopped Kevin Mitchell in London last year.

"He rocked my world," said Crolla (31-5-3, 13 KOs). "I'm not going to lie. … I have to make sure I win a rematch."

NATHAN CLEVERLY TKO 6 NO. 5 JUERGEN BRAEHMER

Oct. 1, Neubrandenburg, Germany (SAT.1, Sky Sports)

It took five years for Nathan Cleverly and Juergen Braehmer to finally face each other in the ring, yet little has changed.

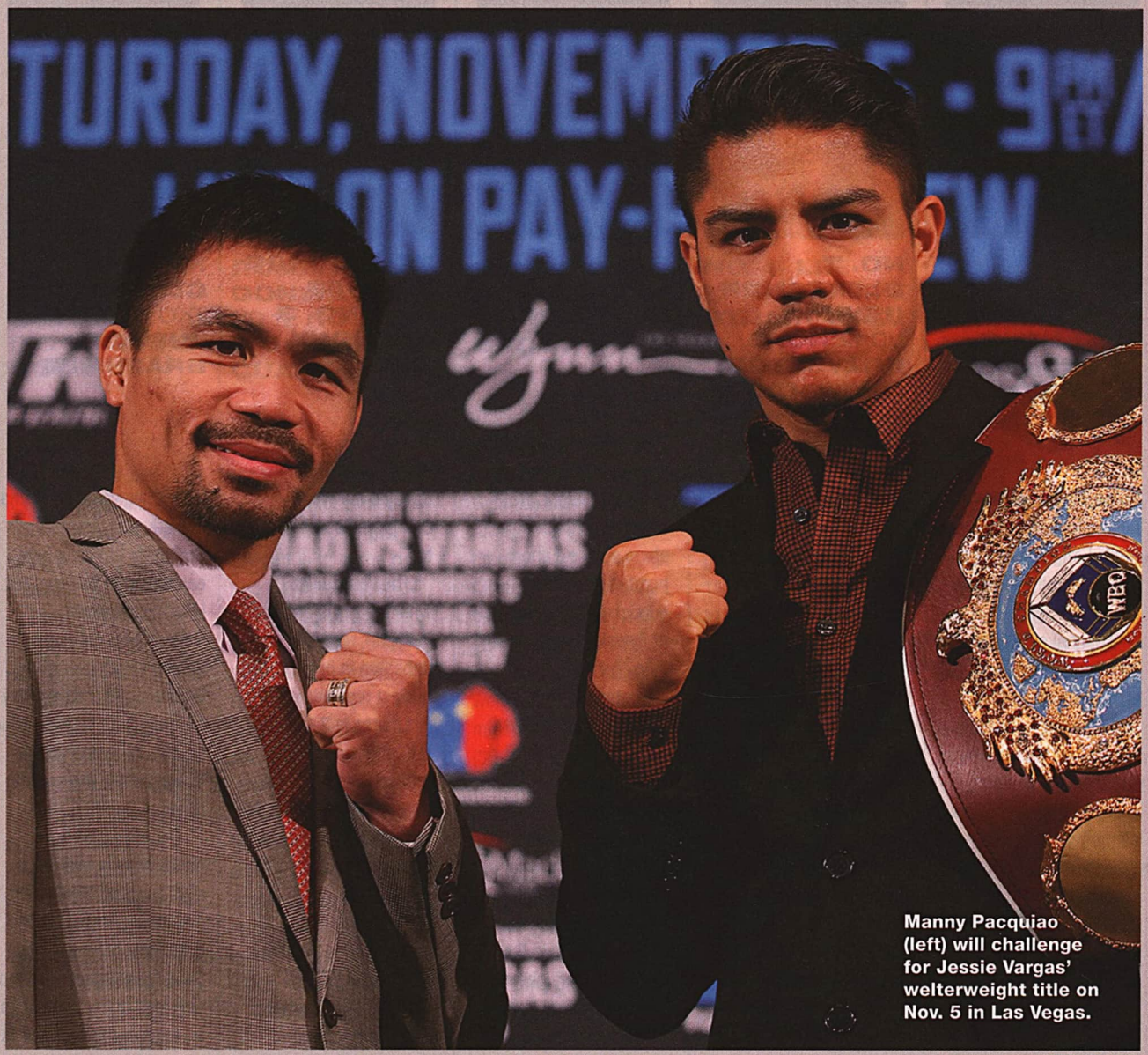
Business remained as unfinished as ever after Braehmer, four days away from his 38th birthday, said an arm injury forced him to quit before the seventh round.

The diagnosis was a minor muscle tear in his right forearm. Surgery isn't necessary, according to Braehmer promoter Kalle Sauerland. Braehmer, who was leading by two points on each of the scorecards after six rounds, said he'd be ready for a rematch in early 2017.

But where? Cleverly (30-3, 16 KOs), a Welshman, has Braehmer's "regular" WBA title (THE RING recognizes Sergey Kovalev as the legitimate titleholder), which presumably comes with some leverage. In effect, Hearn told Braehmer (48-3, 35 KOs) to come and get it.

"We'd love to do it in Wales," Hearn said

"Absolutely not," Sauerland replied.



Manny Pacquiao (left) will challenge for Jessie Vargas' welterweight title on Nov. 5 in Las Vegas.

NOVEMBER

JESSIE VARGAS vs. MANNY PACQUIAO

Date: Nov. 5
Location: Las Vegas
Division: Welterweights (for Vargas' WBO title)
RING Ratings: Vargas No. 8
TV: Pay-per-view
Watchability rating (up to five stars): ★★★★★
Also fighting: Nonito Donaire vs. Jessie Magdaleno, junior featherweights (for Donaire's WBO title); Oscar Valdez vs. Hiroshige Osawa, featherweights (for Valdez's WBO title); Zou Shiming vs. Prasitsak Papoem, flyweights (for the vacant WBO title).
Significance: Pacquiao (58-6-2, 38 KOs) is 37 and near the end of his career but remains formidable, as his clear points victory over Tim Bradley in April demonstrated. Vargas (27-1, 10 KOs) bounced back from a unanimous-decision loss to Bradley to upset then-unbeaten Sadam Ali by ninth-round knockout. Vargas won the vacant WBO title.
Prediction: Rosenthal – Pacquiao UD; Fischer – Pacquiao UD; Harty – Pacquiao UD; Abramson – Pacquiao UD

SERGEY KOVALEV vs. ANDRE WARD

Date: Nov. 19
Location: Las Vegas
Division: Light heavyweights (for Kovalev's IBF, WBA and WBO titles)
RING Ratings: Kovalev No. 1 (P4P No. 2), Ward No. 5 (P4P No. 4)
TV: HBO Pay-Per-View
Watchability rating (up to five stars): ★★★★★
Also fighting: Isaac Chilemba vs. Oleksandr Gvozdyk, light heavyweights.
Significance: Kovalev (30-0-1, 26 KOs) has been one of the hottest boxers the past two years, although Isaac Chilemba gave him more trouble than expected in a unanimous-decision victory in July. Ward (30-0, 15 KOs) has fought only four times since 2012, when he ruled the 168-pound division, because of promotional issues and injuries. This is his chance to reestablish himself.
Prediction: Rosenthal – Ward UD; Fischer – Kovalev UD; Harty – Ward UD; Abramson – Kovalev SD

VASYL LOMACHENKO vs. NICHOLAS WALTERS

Date: Nov. 26
Location: The Cosmopolitan, Las Vegas
Division: Junior lightweights (for Lomachenko's WBO title)
RING Ratings: Lomachenko No. 3 (P4P No. 7)
TV: HBO
Watchability rating (up to five stars): ★★★★★
Significance: This matchup was delayed but it should be worth the wait. Lomachenko (6-1, 4 KOs) has skyrocketed to the top of the boxing world after only seven fights because of his otherworldly skillset. Only wily veteran Orlando Salido was able to get to him. Can Walters do the same? The Jamaican looked like an absolute beast when he took out Nonito Donaire in October 2014 but has gone stale since as a result of inactivity. He is coming off a draw against Jason Sosa last December.
Prediction: Rosenthal – Lomachenko UD; Fischer – Lomachenko UD; Harty – Lomachenko UD; Abramson – Lomachenko UD

NOV. 4 – L.A. Fight Club, Los Angeles (RingTV.com and Estrella TV).
NOV. 12 – Luis Ortiz (No. 4) vs. Malik Scott, heavyweights, Monte Carlo, Monaco (Sky Sports). Also, Jason Sosa (No. 10) vs. Stephen Smith, junior lightweights; Arthur Abraham (No. 8) vs. Martin Murray, super middleweights; Jamie McDonnell (No. 1) vs. Liborio Solis, bantamweights.
NOV. 12 – Mehdi Amar vs. Robert Stieglitz, light heavyweights, Magdeburg, Germany.
NOV. 18 – Mauricio Herrera vs. Pablo Cesar Cano, welterweights, Indio, Calif. (Estrella TV).
NOV. 26 – Anthony Joshua (No. 5) vs. TBA, heavyweights (for Joshua's IBF title), Manchester, England (Showtime). Also, Scott Quigg (No. 2 junior featherweight) vs. TBA, featherweights.
NOV. 26 – Milan Melindo (No. 6) vs. Fahlan Sakkreerin, junior flyweights, Cebu City, Philippines

DECEMBER

DEC. 2 – L.A. Fight Club, Los Angeles (RingTV.com and Estrella TV).
DEC. 2 – Jose Ramirez vs. TBA, junior welterweights, Fresno, Calif. (UniMas).
DEC. 3 – Denis Lebedev (No. 2) vs. Murat Gassiev, cruiserweights (for Lebedev's IBF and WBA titles), Moscow.
DEC. 17 – Orlando Salido (No. 2) vs. Takashi Miura (No. 4), junior lightweights, Inglewood, Calif. (HBO).
DEC. 23 – Artur Beterbiev (No. 6) vs. Isidro Ranoni Prieto, light heavyweights, Gatineau, Canada
DEC. 31 – Jonathan Guzman (No. 8) vs. Yukinori Oguni, junior featherweights (for Guzman's IBF title), Japan.
DEC. 31 – Jezreel Corrales (No. 5) vs. Takashi Uchiyama (No. 6), junior lightweights (for Corrales' WBA title), Japan.

SO CLOSE

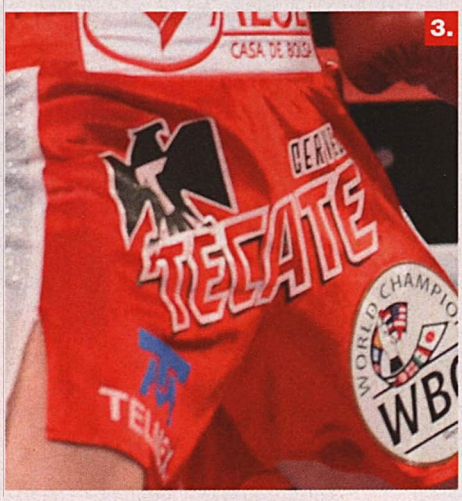
Those who watch the upcoming battle of unbeaten stars – Sergey Kovalev vs. Andre Ward on Nov. 19 – will be in for a special night if it provides half the drama that occurred when two other fighters with zeroes in their loss columns met on March 17, 1990. Meldrick Taylor, the 1984 Olympic gold medalist, fought Julio Cesar Chavez that night at the Hilton Hotel in Las Vegas. And for most of 11-plus rounds Taylor had his way with the great Mexican, who could handle neither his all-around skills nor his remarkable speed and fell behind on the cards. Taylor merely had to survive the 12th and final round to claim a defining victory. Then came the drama. With only seconds remaining in the fight, Chavez, the fresher of the two, put Taylor on his pants with a powerful right (as this photo illustrates). Taylor got to his feet and referee Richard Steele, who had picked up the count, looked into the fighter's eyes to determine his fitness. Then, in what Jim Lampley called "one of the most unusual calls by a referee in the whole history of the sport," Steele stopped the fight. Only two seconds remained on the clock. RING

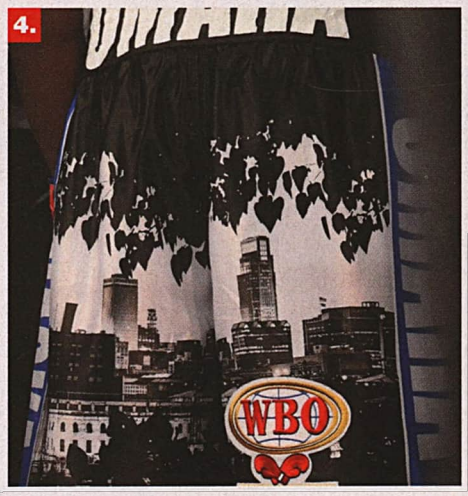
By **Lamar Clark**

FOR BOXING AFICIONADOS ONLY

STYLES MAKE FIGHTS

QUIZ: WHOSE TRUNKS?





Answers: 1. Sergey Kovalev; 2. Timothy Bradley; 3. Canelo Alvarez; 4. Terence Crawford.

Mike Tyson (top left, with wife Kiki) attended the World TeamTennis Smash Hits charity event benefitting the Elton John AIDS Foundation at Caesars Palace in Las Vegas. Paulie Malignaggi (above) made an appearance at the Xbox and "Gears of War 4" launch at the Microsoft Loft in New York.

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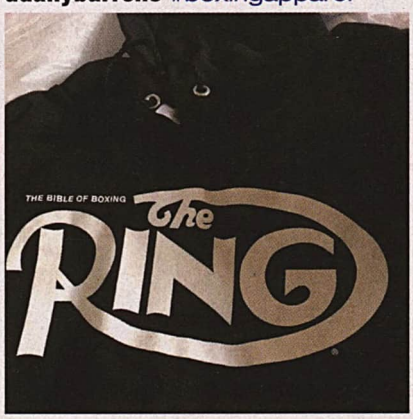

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